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ABSTRACT

To provide a real life example of case study methodology for educational evaluation, a naturalistic study of a Catholic junior college in Minneapolis, Minnesota is presented. Conducted as part of the ongoing evaluation of a federally supported project, the study provides an external observer's descriptive portrayal of the school, plus the methodology. Part I contains the study results. Six verbal snapshots, college description, and profiles of the setting, students, faculty, and staff, and teaching are presented. Historical perspective on the founding order of Sisters and the structural changes in the college since its 1964 beginning are given. Three special issues are discussed: (1) nursing program changes; (2) the General Education program; and (3) the impact of Advanced Institutional Program grants on evaluation procedures and program management. Part II describes the methodology used, including the researcher's personal reactions. Topics covered include: (1) the evaluator's preparation through studying the philosophic basis of naturalistic inquiry, research design and data collection, and analysis techniques; (2) note-taking in the field; (3) phases in the research plan (unobtrusive measures and interviews); (4) interviewing; (5) data analysis and report writing; and (6) final editing and validation. A 17-item bibliography is appended. (BS)

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Case Study Evaluations:

A Case in Point

by

Cliff Malcolm
Wayne Welch

An illustrative report and methodological analysis
of case study evaluations.

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PREFACE

The limited success of experimental inquiry methods in education evaluation has precipitated a search for alternative approaches. Evaluators have used goal-free techniques, judicial hearings, expert consultants, site-visit teams, survey research, and various combinations of these in their attempts to improve the evaluation process. One alternative that appears to be gaining broad support is the case study method which relies heavily upon the naturalistic inquiry techniques found in anthropology and investigative journalism.

Case study evaluations are distinguised by their focus on a bounded system, lack of preordinate structure, minimum disruption or control of the system, and heavy reliance upon participant observation. The evaluator as field worker becomes the major data gathering instrument. Interviews, observations, and archives are the major information sources. Program participants are viewed as informants rather than as subjects of an experiment. The investigator seeks to identify issues, problems, and concerns while portraying complex educational programs. The emphasis is on description although some evaluators believe they have an additional responsibility to make value judgments and to seek explanatory patterns.

The general techniques and the philosophical justification of case study methodology have been presented by several authors. Interested readers are referred to the following sources.

Guba, E. G. Towards a methodology of naturalistic inquiry in educational evaluation, CSE Monograph 8, UCLA, 1978.

Parlett, M. and Hamilton, D. 'Evaluation as illumination' in Tawny, D., (Ed.) Curriculum evaluation today: Trends and implications. London, McMillan, 1976.

Stake, R. (Ed.) Report to the National Science Foundation on the CSSE retrospective conference, Ill., CIRCE, University of Illinois, 1980.

Welch, W. (Ed.) Case Study Methodology in Educational Evaluation. Proceedings of the 1981 Minnesota Evaluation Conference, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 1981.

In spite of the growing popularity of case study methodology, there are few real examples of case reports available for those wishing to learn more about the process. Students of case study evaluations have requested illustrations of report content, style, and format as well as descriptions of the implementation of the case study process.

It is the perceived need for real life examples that prompted this monograph. We offer it as one example of what a case report contains and how it was conducted.

The following study was conducted as part of the ongoing evaluation of a federally supported project at a private junior college. For several years the college had been involved in evaluating its multi-year federal grant using quantitative objective-based approaches. Each year specific objectives were established for the faculty, department, and school and the evaluation sought to determine if these objectives had been achieved. The method was mandated by the federal grant.

However, the staff was concerned that they were looking so closely at the individual trees that they might be losing sight of the forest. They felt a need for a holistic view of their college unrestrained by behavorial objectives. They wanted a fresh look at who they were, what they were doing, and what they might become.

Discussions with the staff eventually led to the decision to implement a naturalistic study of the school without preordinate goals, structure, or criteria in mind. Our intent was to provide a descriptive portrayal of the school as seen through the eyes of an external observer.

In this monograph, we present the results of the study in Part I. An analysis of the techniques, frustrations, and solutions to problems is presented in Part II. We hope this document will provide a useful case example of case study evaluation. We welcome comments and suggestions.

Wayne W. Welch

Cliff Malcolm

I. THE CASE REPORT

It's a Matter of Caring: Madonna Junior College

Throughout this report, all names are fictitious. Further, the sex of individuals, their status in the institution, and the departments and offices concerned have often been altered except where such alteration destroys the significance of the comments or observations reported.

"I stood here for a while to see all there was to see. It is time to go now. I have learned to look; to see in many different ways. My vision has evolved, expanded. . ."

Peg Randall
MJC Graduate, Summer, 1979

Prologue: Six Snapshots

It was late in the afternoon on the last day of the fall quarter and most of the faculty and students had gone. Sister Frances came into the staff lounge and sank into an easy chair opposite me. We had already become friends because, in her unassuming way, she makes friends easily.

"Things are so much different now," she announced.

Then, in that reflective mood that often dawns when the pressure is taken off and you know you've won, she relaxed and talked about the many changes that have occurred in the fifteen-year life of Madonna Junior College.

She came from Mercy Hospital faculty to the college faculty a few years after the college started. Since then, she has moved through a succession of roles according to changing needs and year-to-year fluctuations in enrollments. She described the initial student group in the "Catholic Girl's School of Nursing" tradition and talked about the transition to a group increasingly heterogeneous in background, ability, and aspirations. We talked of old buildings and fire hazards, of leaders with vision and their committed colleagues, of federal intervention through legislation and grants, of societal trends and accreditation pressures, of programs that came and went, of new directions and new personnel.

"Over the past few years," she told me, "federal grants have given us plenty of opportunity to innovate. It's been very stimulating and very exciting. It's also been very demanding..."

Teachers in a rapidly changing world. Sometimes, with vision and enthusiasm, we take control. Sometimes we do little more than roll with the punches.

****

From my seventh-story window, I watched a blind student coming to college. Crossing 25th Avenue diagonally, he was walking quickly and boldly, his cane probing the space in front of him like a bat's sonar. He collided heavily with a parked car because his cane went under it. Uh-oh. He turned and walked along the road five paces then swung right again, only to collide with another parked car. Cautious for a moment, he felt his way arount it and crossed to the sidewalk. Then he sought the line where the grass met the sidewalk and, with one foot on the concrete and the other on the grass so as not to miss his turning, he struck out for the college. Feedback and control. From where I stood, I couldn't hear, but I had the feeling he was whistling as he walked.

****

Helen McHutcheon's freshman class in anatomy was drawing to a close. There were eight students working with models, worksheets, and each other. It was a review session on the identification of internal body organs and their function.

As the students packed up to leave, two noticed a bulletin advertising a class on the dissection of a sheep's brain. "Is that for us?" one asked. Helen told them it was for the sophomore class and then added, "Those hearts are so small I'm sure they must be fetal." The students looked quizzical, so she explained how the biological supplies firms obtained fetuses from the wombs of slaughtered animals. The students'

whispered "Distasteful, but interesting." Helen took from a nearby pail a fetal pig that was already opened up by a longitudinal cut through the chest and abdomen. She handled it easily as she talked about preserving techniques, then, opening the chest incision, she lead the students gently through a question-prompt-answer lesson on internal organs, diverting only to point to the green color of the intestines and talk about the green stools of newborn infants. The teachable moment.

****

The faculty of one of the Technical Education groups held a luncheon-conference with supervisors from the clinical settings. I dropped in as lunch was finishing, expecting to mingle unobtrusively--somewhat difficult when you're the only male in a group of about twenty-five and everyone else seems to know each other. I had no advance knowledge of the purposes of the meeting, so I thought I'd try to extract the goals from what was happening.

The faculty members, especially three or four of them, were moving easily amongst the guests, now flitting, now settling, making conversation, making introductions, serving food. The buzz of talk was generally professional, even when it centered on the current positions of mutual acquaintances. Goal one: liaison and public relations.

The group viewed a tape-slide program. It was an illustrated lecture showing blind students in action and some of the techniques and facilities developed by the faculty to enable blind students to achieve. The impressive aspects of the presentation were the ingenuity of the teaching techniques and facilities developed and the level of achievement of the

blind students. Later the group would discuss the possibilities of blind graduates making real contributions in the day-to-day operations of clinics. Goal two: to orient and inform the supervisors about Madonna's work with blind students, to offer some perception of what blind students could achieve, and to get feedback about their role in the clinical setting.

Working singly, the clinical supervisors checked a list of competencies. They rated each on whether it was required often, seldom, or never by an assistant in the clinical setting and suggested the extent to which each institution could assist with clinical training in that competency. When the lists were completed, the group discussed each answer in an attempt at closure that reminded me of the Delphi strategy. Goal three: evaluation and prioritization of a list of competencies.

To me, the entire session was so well-planned, so slick, and the goals so clear that I haven't bothered to check the accuracy of my perceptions.

****

"This place works on personalities, and it's scary to me. . . There are some people here with incredible amounts of power.

"If I was trying to think of one thing that would really change this institution--it isn't the curriculum. It is changing Tim O'Brien (the Vice President) or Sister Joanna (the President) out of those positions and having someone else in them. That would

really make a difference. I'm not saying it would be better necessarily, but it sure would be different. And that tells me how much power lies in Tim O'Brien's office especially. He runs this place.

"It's incredible how much power he has. And I'm uncomfortable with the way he yields it. He's as cagey as hell. His favorite game is 'devil's advocate.' And people who enjoy devil's advocate positions--you never know where they're at!

"And there's no one evaluating him! He set up the evaluation system and there's no one evaluating him (of any consequence), so there's no way to get to him in the sense of making him accountable. He can pretty well do anything he damn well wants--and he does. I'm not ascribing maliciousness to him, because I don't think he is. . ."

A faculty member

****

Hey! Don't pick me
out
of the cool moist
earth
when my roots
are
making time
with the worms.

Don't pluck my touchy
petals
and let their
color
glisten on your
palm.

The music
sings
a foreign tune
to you!

Open your stuffed-up
ears

Listen to the
sweet melody
of my song.

Don't break my
leaves
to suit your vase.
I have no case
for your roof.

Let the sun break through its
shingles and bring you
light
upon your thick woven rug...

How dare you say, "I want."
What words are these?

For me, this way
I cannot stand

Marjorie Taylor
MJC graduate, Summer, 1979

Introduction

Madonna Junior College is a two-year college in Minneapolis. The college is in an old area of the city, nestled behind a complex of hospitals--Riverview Hospital, Mercy Hospital, and Madonna Rehabilitation Center--and looks across the Mississippi River to the University of Minnesota. It offers Associate degrees in the health and human service fields: about half of its approximately 800 students are in Nursing with the rest spread amongst programs such as Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Medical Laboratory Technician, and so forth.

The college programs are characterized by their combination of "nuts and bolts" technician training with personal education through liberal arts and (Christian) religious thought and values. This is in accord with the college's view of the health professional as one equipped and able to care for "the whole person". An important thrust of the college is to live this mission as well as to teach it in the classrooms. Thus it impinges on admissions policies (open admission and a wish to "serve the underserved"), teaching styles and the general accessibility of faculty and staff to students and each other, and the respect for individuality within the college. The result is a remarkable diversity within both the student population and the faculty and staff. Of itself, this diversity could be expected to produce a high rate of innovation and change. But the rate of change has been further propelled by the facts that first, the college is only 15 years old and was unique in concept when it was formed; second, by the conscious efforts of the senior administration to "institutionalize" innovation and change; third, by success in gaining grants for innovation and development and the attendant time pressures on goal

achievement, by staffing policies including the kind of people appointed and the rate of staff turnover; and fourth, by the size and nature of the institution (smaller than a university, bigger and more complex than a single university department). All of these "internal" factors must be seen in the light of the remarkable changes in western society that have occurred over the last decade: Who would say that the society of 1979 is like that of 1965? Who would say that the climate for and demands upon higher education are similar?

The story I wish to tell is the story of people at work in the context I have sketched above: the people I have watched, listened to, talked with, debated with, and at times worked with during 15 days between November 13 and December 15, 1979. My story is meant for them, their peers, and their colleagues.

I have chosen the style of the report according to what I believe a study such as this can and cannot do well, especially given the time constraints. For example, it cannot effectively survey faculty, staff, or student opinion on any particular issue. I have taken a viewpoint as worthy of reporting if it is expressed by three or four people, if it has been expressed "on the record" by one who has recognized authority to make statements on such issues, or occasionally, if it is made by one individual but has special significance because it ties together a number of observations or comments. At the same time, I have tried to sample events and points of view across the variety of strata and subgroups that I have identified within the college.

The result is most like a collage: an attempt to convey meaning without directly stated generalizations. My evidence is contained in over 220 pages of notes of interview and observations, supplemented by a variety

of MJC documents. Especially, it is in the words of the 45 faculty and staff and the 20 students with whom I had conversations (about one-third which were recorded on audio cassette). The story that I tell is thus the one that was told to me.

The story is also my own, because I was a part of it and because I processed the words. I came from outside, but I brought my own preconceptions. Before starting the study, I had met the Administrative Group and had read the Bulletin and some of the AIDP documents. More important are the facts that I am Australian, I have a background in teaching and in the organization of higher education through ten years' experience at a teacher's college in Melbourne, and my original research training was in nuclear physics.

The cultural differences between Australia and the United States are easily underrated. On the eve of Thanksgiving, I watched a telemovie on the voyage of The Mayflower to the New Land. The people came with courage and optimism, seeking freedom and fortune. By contrast, the first settlers to Australia were the boatloads of convicts brought by their jailers to a hard brown land on the other side of the world. Courage? Who had a choice? If American independence was prompted by indignation at paying taxes to England, its Australian counterpart was the overthrow of the New South Wales Corps (the jailers) by the convicts and ex-convicts they exploited. Surely these cultural beginnings make for greater differences now than variations in language and pronunciation!

At Melbourne State College, I am used to "collegiate government" and a particular management structure. My institution is committed to both professional and personal education. We take pride in innovation within the college and in our influence on education beyond the college. We

battle with societal changes and nationwide trends in higher education. The comparisons with MJC are irresistible but dangerous because of specific differences and the different cultural settings.

The study is no doubt colored (sometimes helpfully, sometimes not) by these and other aspects of my personal background. Like any research effort, the final judgment of worth will be made by others.

Chapter 1

Profiles

The Setting: Buildings and Facilities

It's a 10 minute bus ride to Madonna Junior College from downtown. You pass beside the unused railway yards, you cross under an old railway bridge and over a freeway. Where the University of Minnesota spills across to this side of the river, there is a collection of shops and pubs dimly reminiscent of the hippie era that is now struggling toward a "Good Earth" theme. It's an older part of town, sometimes colorful, often simply run down.

The college and its surrounding complex of hospitals seem out of context here. Stark multi-story "new wings" look down across asphalt and parked cars to the street, ill-at-ease with the impression they give of mass production and impersonal efficiency. The junior college, backed up against the Mississippi, likewise presents its eight-story new wing to the parking lots and the street--brown bricks and big windows--the scene is softened by the fact that most of the building stands on stilts, enabling a veiw of the adjoining six-story old wing, with steps and gardens in the central courtyard.

It was snowing on the November morning I first arrived. Big wet flakes drifting down; no wind, not cold. When I entered the new wing, the receptionist greeted me with "Merry Christmas". A notice outside the elevators advised that financial aid checks were now available, another advertised that tuition fees were $768 a quarter.

I wandered around the buildings. MJC doesn't have a campus, just its buildings. The new wing is bright and airy with its broad corridors, indirect lighting, white walls, and big windows. Apart from the brick

color, it makes little effort to blend architecturally with the U-shaped old building which adjoins it at both ends.

Room 718-719 is typical of the lecture-tutorial rooms in the new wing. It can be used as a single room to accommodate about 30 students, or it can be partitioned longitudinally to provide two small rooms with separate entrances. The blackboards are small; instead, at the seating focus, there is a lecturn and an overhead projector. To the left of the lecturn is a hospital bed and some other demonstration equipment. There are a dozen rooms similar to 718-719 in the top three levels of the new wing. Some are permanently partitioned; for others, the use varies.

Small rooms for small classes are the norm at Madonna. In the old wing*, all but a couple of the dozen rooms used by classes are laboratories, set up to accommodate sometimes as few as eight, but usually from 12 to 15 students. There are two more laboratories of similar size in the new wing and two art rooms, slightly larger. In the new wing there are also four small conference rooms (to accommodate 8 to 10 people around a single table) and one larger one. Associated with the central audio-visual center, there are two small rooms for viewing videotapes or film loops.

The action is in the laboratories: the Nursing laboratory, set up as a modern four-bed hospital ward complete with screens, charts, and other ward paraphernalia; the Anatomy and Physiology laboratory with models, photographs, and charts around the walls and work benches in the center; the Occupational Therapy laboratory with its craft materials and its charts written in Braille as well as print; the Science laboratory with its bright colors and equipment cupboards that allow a quick change-over from stereomicroscopes to chemistry sets; the Medical Technician

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*The top three floors accommodate the dormitories.

laboratory with its large analysis equipment. Of the large equipment, much of it is quite old. I was told that a lot of this sort of equipment was given to the college by Mercy Hospital when it became superseded. Apart from the cost saving to the college, it often has the advantage of showing more clearly the principles of operation of modern equipment. The disadvantage is that it is old and old-fashioned.

The fourth level of the new wing is devoted to the library: a cool, refreshing room that takes advantage of the open architecture. Two large windows extend the spaciousness beyond some 40 work places along the south wall. The work tables are large, heavy wooden ones with matching chairs, slightly reminiscent of a father's den or a grandfather's dining room. To the east, toward the loans desk, is a "workpit" surrounded by volumes of encyclopedias and other research books in low bookcases. The main collection is in standard steel shelves in the center of the room. The books and journals available, I was told, have been chosen to extend only slightly beyond the needs of students and classes at Madonna. There are two exits from the library and no security check at either.

The Audio-Visual Center is below the library, on the third level. It is dominated by an overwhelming array of 90 individual carrels, 75 of them equipped with a carousel slide projector, a tape recorder, and earphones. At the west end, a row of six carrels are set up for film loops. At the east end, two or three rows are used for tape-physiological-model programs or simply for tape-question-sheet programs.

Other small tape-slide centers exist in the old building, notably in a tutorial room beside the Medical Technician Laboratory where students prepare for their laboratory work and in one of the Occupational Therapy laboratories.

Most of the tape-slide programs are produced at the college, as are many of the video programs. "We have a good photographer from the AV department, and an artist helps with the drawings, cartoons, and lettering," Sister Frances told me. Many of the materials are produced during the summer; often faculty assistants help out. The college also has a production studio: a sound studio and a TV studio connected to each other and to a technician's control room via glass panels.

While MIC provides an environment set up and well-equipped for teaching and learning, it provides few of the trappings of collegiate life. (Neither do the students press for them). There is no gymnasium, no pool no theater. There are few clubs, societies, or large-scale social events. There is no day-care center and no food service except for a collection of vending machines and a microwave oven in the student lounge.

The student lounge is large, offering for the seating of perhaps 100 persons at banks of dining tables along two walls and on couches and lounge chairs that encircle the remaining square. The room struggles to be lively with floor-to-ceiling half-tone photographs on the walls, splashes of orange paint, and a table tennis table in the far corner. But it's hard to compete against an array of vending machines and grey-topped, grey-legged cafeteria tables.

More appealing are the two small lounges near the main entrance to the old wing. They are like family living rooms, with couches, coffee tables, lamps, and newspapers.

The faculty lounge, like the main student lounge, is unsuccessful in its bid to appear inviting. It is a dark room with three dining tables, and a piano at one end, a circle of lounge chairs and a TV at the other, and coffee continually available at the side bench.

Yet both lounges fulfill their purpose of bringing people together to share with and enjoy one another. Madonna is a friendly place: optimistic and personable.

For almost all teaching faculty and administrators, the offices are for single occupancy and most have a window. Standard equipment outside the offices are mail or assignment hoppers and bulletin boards. Timetables are displayed with commitments from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., though some classes start earlier and others finish later. For most faculty, about half of the timetables are crosshatched. Many of the bulletin boards follow a local fashion of displaying a slogan or poem with a philosophical twist; for example, "If you think fishermen exaggerate, ask a jogger how far he jogs every day" or "Children will be towed away at the owner's expense."

Office interiors are decorated according to the occupants' tastes. Some have no more than the furniture supplied. Some are like miniature greenhouses. I especially liked John Christie's office. It is in the old wing with a view of the Mississippi and the University of Minnesota beyond. It's more similar to a den than an office. There are a number of chairs. Posters, paintings, and Catholic religious symbols adorn the walls. Books of religious writings, philosophy, and sociology are arranged in small bookshelves here and there, and between bookends on the desk. It is cozy and warm, though for me it would be hard to keep tidy.

All faculty and staff make an effort to be accessible. I wonder if the President sets the pace. The President's office opens directly onto the corridor that leads to the faculty lounge. No anteroom or secretary are there to shield her from interruption; indeed, her secretary's office is on a different corridor. Just inside her door is a big wooden con-

ference table. Her desk sits diagonally across the large room, softened by a few potted plants and situated such that the smallest of head movements enable her to look to the door or through the windows opposite it to the courtyard. She often works with her door open. I was advised that if I wished to see her it was appropriate to knock and walk in if she was there. I did and she invited me to take a chair at her elbow (not across the room and low down!). I suggested that we make an appointment. "Would now be convenient for you?" she inquired as she put down her pen.

The Students

MJC has a steady enrollment of approximately 800 students, about 45% of whom are in nursing.

I went to the student lounge during the noon hour on my very first day, November 13, especially to observe and meet students. My notebook records my first impressions with the boldface words: "Youth, female, cigarettes, jeans." But it is difficult to typify the MJC student and dangerous to generalize from the group that frequents the lounge. In fact, 91% of this year's freshman group are female, but, while 28% are under 19 years of age and 50% are under 21, another 28% are 25 or older*.

I was too diffident to approach any of the large groups of 18-year-old girls, so instead I introduced myself to a group of three older students. Vi was about 40, twenty years away from high school with a grown family. She was a freshman in Nursing but was taking only General Education subjects this quarter in order to "prove" her academic ability. Mary was about 27; she had a five-year-old daughter and was recently separated from her husband. Like Vi, Mary was a freshman in Nursing, taking General Education courses

*Student Information Questionnaire, 1979-80, MJC

to establish her academic ability. Helen was about 30, round and jolly and dressed in cheap clothes. She had two young children and shared with Mary the fact that her marriage was "just finished." She was a freshman in Special Education and had come into contact with the other two women through the General Education studies. For all three, their last school experience had been some years ago and their grades then, they admitted with a grin, "were not too good."

Open admission is a part of the college's policy. As well, the desire to "serve the underserved" has always been a key platform in the college mission, intensified through federal funding and the Advanced Institutional Development Program (AIDP).

Of this year's freshman group, 16% are currently married and a further 8% are divorced or separated. Helen and Mary told me they were aware of "quite a few" single mothers, both among the group whose marriages had failed and among the unmarried girls.

I wondered about the income of these women. Indeed, the standard of dress among the students generally--cheap jeans and cotton shirts--suggested to me low income rather than fashion. Yet it seems odd to have low income people enrolling in a private school. Sister Barbara in the Admissions Office estimated that over 50% (perhaps even 75%) were on some form of financial aid (including loans) and that about 40% were on "free money" determined by means or needs tests. About 70% of the students work part-time. She suggested that "15% to 20% would probably not be here except for federal grants." Most of those are single parents.

In that first meeting with Vi, Helen, and Mary, they also pointed out to me that there were "a lot" of the freshmen who were at least a couple

of years away from high school. Some of these had simply drifted for a while. Others had been to college or a vocational-technical institution, perhaps full-time, perhaps part-time; others had worked in hospitals, and so forth. I asked Helen for a percentage. She thought nearly half. "No," countered Mary, "maybe a quarter." They argued for a while. Helen, you were closer! Sixty percent of this year's freshman group have had previous experience at a college or vocational-technical institute. Nearly 30% have accumulated more than 45 credits; 13% have acquired more than 90 credits; 8% have baccalaureate degrees. For those who have completed credits, that experience was more than a year past in two out of three cases.

This is not to suggest that the ability of students at intake is generally high, but rather to point out the diversity of student backgrounds. Many of the faculty used the term "very average" to typify the level of student ability. A problem that was discussed at a Program Directors' meeting and explained to me by one of the Student Counselors was the low literacy level of many students. Tom Guilford, who works with such students, estimated that there were perhaps 100 with a reading ability at about sixth grade level. These students had difficulty reading and extreme difficulty writing simple instructions or reports. Three of the Nursing faculty elaborated by telling me about the problems that arise from students misreading textbooks in their preparation for exams.

Compounding the diversity described above are the facts that there are 18 "visually impaired" (some totally blind) students currently enrolled and that in the spring quarter of 1980, the first "hearing impaired" students (three or four) are expected to begin studies at the college.

On the other hand, there are some fairly uniform student characteristics. From the statistics for this year's freshmen, 91% are female, 95% are "white, non-Hispanic" and nearly 80% are professed Christians, 51% are Roman Catholics. Nearly 70% come from the Twin Cities area and hope to work here after graduation. As well, there is a certain homogeneity in personal style which, to me, is epitomized in Sharon, a fresh-faced, 19-year-old who has just started in Occupational Therapy. As she talked about her courses and herself, it was clear that she was very strongly committed to her profession and her career. She had chosen it because she truly "wanted to help other people" and was looking forward to starting work. This concern for other people extended into broader social concerns--poverty, the handicapped, the aged--but not into politics or economics. Neither did it manifest as interest in theater or the arts. My impression is that these personality attributes also characterize the faculty and staff: professional commitment, caring, and willingness to serve, the concepts that are central to the college mission.

I asked the students why they chose Madonna Junior College. For many, the central reason was that after only two years they would emerge with a professional/technical qualification and excellent prospects of employment. Mature-age students, like Helen and Mary, often came because "I wouldn't get admitted anywhere else". Some, like Gayle, gathered brochures and catalogues from a number of institutions and constructed a "five-year-plan" in the light of their research. Gayle spent a year "goofing around" after high school before entering the Special Education course. She chose Madonna because of its smallness, its personable style, and its programs. She intends to transfer her credits to St. Cloud University and

complete a four-year degree there. I interviewed Gayle and Amy together. Amy was horrified that anyone could be so systematic and felt it must be atypical. Amy had chosen Madonna because she knew someone who recommended it, and, indeed, her selection process is the more typical. Over 40% of the freshmen report that they learned about Madonna either directly or indirectly from someone who had been there, and a further 15% learned about it from someone working in a health field. Forty-three percent of the freshmen considered no alternative school.

Carol Benson, one of the Admissions Counselors, told me that demand for places at MJC had increased about 14% over the past year and that recruitment was no problem. (The college has no plans to increase its size.) She praised the alumni for their role in bringing students to the college. The alumni were important both because of the impressions of the college that they passed on to prospective students and because they were so largely responsible for the college's reputation among prospective employers.

If the alumni pass on glowing impressions of Madonna, much of the glow must develop retrospectively after graduation. In a survey of the completing classes in the spring of 1979*, only one-third were confident they would recommend the college to prospective students. Another third were confident they would not.

Many of the students I talked with were critical of the college, but except for students in the Nursing program (where there is considerable dissatisfaction), criticisms made by any one student were usually countered by another.

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*Student Information form, Sophomores, 1979

Amy enrolled in Special Education because it had been recommended very highly to her by friends who were graduates. She had spent the previous year in a University course. She was adamant that MJC hadn't matched her expectations: "The coursework is not very demanding. If it seems difficult, it's more through lack of clarity in presentation than anything else... Much of the time (in Special Education) is spent on stuff that's trivial. It's on practicums where the really valuable learning happens." Gayle was taking the same program and countered that, from discussions she had had with Madonna students who had gone on to St. Cloud State University and then out to work with a four-year degree, it was the learning at Madonna that had been of greatest value. The two girls argued for a while and finally agreed that it was "probably about 50/50" as far as the difficulty was concerned. They enjoyed the individual attention from instructors. "It's different from the University," Amy said, "where the groups are large and nobody knows you from Adam." Many students commended the personable interaction style that, to them, characterized the college. To me also, as I lived at the college, this feeling of warm friendliness pervaded the corridors, classrooms, and lounges. It's a good feeling.

I was concerned about the difficulties I faced with sampling as I tried to gauge levels of student satisfaction, so I turned to the counselors from Student Counseling, Admissions Counseling, and Financial Aid Counseling. They confirmed for me that student satisfaction was "probably high" except within the Nursing program. Since nearly half of the students are in Nursing, this generalization is consistent with the survey result that only a third of the students would confidently recommend the college to others. Furthermore, from the nature of many of the criticisms I heard (such as Amy's above)

and from the natural ways in which one's yardsticks change when one passes from the school environment to the work environment, it is understandable that the alumni become more positive about the college than they were as students.

Two further points should be made about the student's stated levels of satisfaction. The first is that, as a group, they are not very vocal, and the second is that they are busy. As one 19-year-old Physical Therapy student said when I asked about extracurricular activities and student involvement in government, "We're too busy. Anyway, in your first year you're new and in your second year you're gearing up to start work." Sandra Bailey, a counselor, suggested that students were not too inclined to analyze their situations, implying that it was partly their personal style. She added that student workloads were well-matched to the time available and that students found the work demanding.

Sandra had a theory that it was the diversity of working styles required of the student at Madonna rather than the difficulty level that made the courses demanding. "In, say, a B.A. at a university, you have to be able to read, write, perhaps solve problems, and generally be a good person. If you do those things you pass. The number of dimensions at Madonna is larger. You still have to do the things the B.A. student does, but as well, there is the practical work and the technical skills. You have to interact with other people--with patients, supervisors, and so on--in both practicums and simulation laboratories. And at every step there are both explicit and covert evaluations. It's very demanding."

Across from my office, a class of sophomore nurses were queued in the corridor, waiting to take a skills test. They were drilling each

other orally on the steps involved in the procedure to be tested. Said one student to another, "Gosh, you'd think we were silly little freshmen. Why do we still get so worked up about these simple little tests?"

The student's time is short, her career motivation is high, and the work is demanding. Who needs student involvement in government or, for that matter, organized student services and activities? The Vice President told me:

> "Students are mostly indifferent (to involvement in government). Every now and then a crusader--either faculty or student ---tries to get it going. But it fizzles out.
>
> "The same is true of student activities. We tried to organize a film series. Nobody came. We thought we should let the students choose the films. Still nobody. We dropped the admission charge. . .Eventually we ran out of hypotheses."

A group of nurses explained, "Many of us are past 23 or 24, and our lives are pretty much established." The same is not true of the students who come to live in the dormitories. They express initial disappointment at the lack of services and activities, Sandra Bailey told me, but they soon learn to make their own fun.

The Faculty and Staff

As one faculty member put it (and others expressed the same view), "The strength of this place is due to the strength of the individuals. Good work has been done because individuals saw needs and responded with work and extra work to improve curricula." In large measure, it is the individuals--their talents, their personalities, their interactions, their struggles with life both within and outside the college--who define the institution. It is the teacher in her classroom--not mission statements or even "program blueprints"--who defines the curriculum.

MJC has about 96 faculty and professional staff (including 10 faculty assistants, but excluding about 40 support staff). I had discussions and interviews with about 45 of them and brief encounters with others. I watched them, listened to them, argued with them, worked with them, and generally tried to see as they see. Their words and their actions cast my story and the framework for it.

There was Gladys, whose 55th birthday, the faculty and staff celebrated by eating cake together; Alan Thomas who came to classes on the last day before Christmas dressed as Santa Claus, kissed the girls and made them laugh. There was the Vice President with his twinkling eyes and the games people play. There was the Dean, gently but clearly coaching and prodding her team towards shared government. There was Mary O'Connor, her jolly frame pushed into a grey pant suit and a cup of coffee continually in her hand, who tried to give the impression that teaching was only a part of her life, yet who was often on deck from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. There was Tom Guilford, who wanted to start a union but could get no support. There was elegant Sister Jane, quietly building a world-view that tied together her science, theology, and the humanities. And there was little Sister Freda, who phoned an old number to check an ex-student's address and ended up talking for 20 minutes with the girl's mother, sharing the woman's personal problems. Real people.

Of the 96 faculty and staff, about 67% teach. The others are in administration (9%), audio-visual and library services (6%), development and research (12%), and counseling (5%).*

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*Survey of Faculty Characteristics and Credentials, MJC, Winter, 1980

About 80% of the faculty and staff are female. Many of them are married (so for their families, their earnings provide a second income). About 26 of the total number of employees are from the Community of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Seven or eight of these have significant teaching roles (usually in General Education), and the rest work within administration, services and support. Apart from the President and the Head of Admissions, the Sisters hold few leadership roles. The male teachers usually work in the General Education program, reflecting the tradition of the health services field as a female domain.

About 25% of the faculty and staff are employed part-time. Some of them, especially in Nursing, are essentially "permanent" part-timers. The use of part-time teachers and the partial deployment of others is a natural consequence of the smallness of specialized programs within the college. Except for Nursing (with nearly 20 faculty), the Technical Education programs require only 3 to 5 faculty in each (including the directors). Similarly, the General Education course comprises a large number of areas, many requiring only 1 to 2 faculty.

Typically, the faculty and staff are young (in the 25-40 age group), have a number of certificates and degrees, and among those in the Technical Education programs, have worked at least two years in a clinical setting.

The rate of faculty turnover is high. Only about 20% have tenure and about this same percentage have been at the college more than eight years. About 50% have been at the college less than three years. For 20% this is their first year.

I see the faculty and staff group as paralleling the students in many ways: female; mostly young; at college for only a couple of years; strongly

committed to their professions and to educating good professionals; keen to serve; concerned, but not politically oriented; busy, busy with classes, courses and students, but often not making time (or perhaps not inclined) to contemplate the whole and themselves in relation to it. Thus in spite of diversity of background and specialized skills, in spite of the "maverick" aspects typical of people who like to innovate, there is a certain uniformity of style.

This kind of person and indeed the rapid turnover suit the purposes and style of the current college administration very well. (So does the college suit most faculty.) The President is unequivocal in her desire to "institutionalize change" and in her belief that "caring" should be central to the ethos of Madonna: that any student can succeed if she is given enough help and the right kind of help. These pressures for innovation and to be forever accessible and helpful to students make enormous demands on teachers. It is my experience in my own institution that faculty make their greatest innovative impact on curriculum during their first five years in the institution. Especially if the environment is stimulating and supportive, the demands of innovation and accessibility to students are not too great to bear for three or four years at a time; they are more likely enjoyable. But after that, a number of factors mitigate to lower one's spirit. First, you are tired and would enjoy some stability for a while. Second, a number of your own innovations, likely to be still cherished, are rejected or overlooked by the newer faculty, and a piece of you is rejected with them. I see these phenomena at Madonna.

For many, usually those recently appointed, the college is an answer to their dreams. As one faculty member put it to me, "I can't imagine a better place to work, especially compared to hospitals I've been in and the University

when I was a student. . ." On faculty enthusiasm, innovation, and support, she commented with an enraptured sigh, "It's the air you breathe! I can't imagine a better place to be for faculty development!"

Another expressed the same views:

> "There is freedom here to teach as we see appropriate. There is input available to us and pressure put on us to make us informed and help us develop new skills and foundation knowledge.
>
> "This is a good place to come as a stepping stone, both because of the climate of the place and because, for a professional, it's good on your curriculum vita to have taught for a while."

For other faculty, especially those who have been there for some years, there is uneasiness about workloads and a sense of resignation to working on the fringe, to concentrating on the immediate and the "busy work":

> "I'm not sure why they're changing the theme (of the General Education course)...The 'Phenomenon of Man' (Teilhard) worked. Man looked out to astronomy and the physical world. He looked in to psychology and social behavior and he looked toward God. That's nice. It fits.
>
> "The 'Ways of Knowing' (Phenix, "The Realms of Meaning") doesn't seem to divide the curriculum in any way...So it doesn't seem to be an organizing principle. Some other people maybe understand it better than I. . .
>
> "Why is the old theme being thrown out? Sexism is probably important. And the book is old. Also, faculty change..."

I talked to some of the older Nursing faculty about the major changes in the Nursing curriculum that were introduced last year:

> "It has been disturbing to see some of the material that was good (not taken over)...for example, the old AV materials weren't examined to see what could be kept in spite of new copyright laws, or what could be valuably used in the new program..."
>
> "It seemed like such a drastic change--not just the swing to competencies, but the objectives and the way everything was set up. I don't know if it was necessary or not, but that's the way it was."

> "I was very disappointed and upset about all the new people doing all the development."
>
> "We're past the point of looking at that so much now. Dealing with the day-to-day. Implementing this. Finding that there are 40 hassles a day."

With staff turnover as high as it is, many of the initiators have since moved on. "It's most of us who weren't involved in (the new curriculums) becoming who are involved in it now."

In an institution where caring is central, who looks out for individuals like these? I asked the President, and her eyes betrayed her genuine concern and yet a certain hopelessness:

> "We've made some attempts at giving them a voice in transition. But they seem immobilized, so the attempts have been unsuccessful.
>
> "I don't know. Attempt to be respectful and genuinely caring. But I don't think it's being perceived that way, and I don't know how you make it more real to them.
>
> "You have to be strong in personality and self-confidence to work here. . .
>
> "The particularly disturbing cases are those who are especially good teachers, but not so good at the knock-down, drag-out life outside the classroom. . ."

Yet for most of the faculty, morale and job satisfaction are high. So they should be. You work with only 2 to 4 other faculty, without a need for formality, developing and teaching in your professional area. You have freedom to exercise your judgment, and the facilities, support, and money to make it happen. The college is small enough and the various programs similar enough that there is support to be found outside your own specialist group.

I wondered, in terms of the interpretation I have offered above, whether the high rate of faculty turnover was a deliberate policy of the

college. I talked to Tim O'Brien (the Vice President) about it, as I kept in mind that many move on because they only saw the college as a stepping stone to something else. He told me that the staffing policies (year-to-year contracts with at least a year's notice required after the first probationary year; few people on tenure) were established not so much to encourage change, but to permit it.

The extensive faculty evaluation system is the key:

> "We have the data to expose weaknesses.
>
> "Faculty aren't aware of how many people are let go. I think that (fact) stays sort of covert. You know: 'Why isn't Jane Smith there anymore?' 'She left and took a job.' Jane Smith didn't leave at all--she was let go.
>
> "This is not widespread, but the machinery is there to make it possible...The approach is more a matter of building and maintaining quality than institutionalizing change..."

If the personal characteristics and the transience of faculty at Madonna suit the college goals of curriculum innovation and committed teaching, they are no less suited to the existing management structures. For historical and personal reasons, tremendous power resides with and many decisions are made by the President and Vice President and the Administrative Group over which they preside. I am astounded that most faculty are content with the system. (A few are uneasy but their concerns are not sufficiently heartfelt to initiate a new order.)

Part of my astonishment is no doubt cultural. The Australian political system is based on the British parliamentary model, with no counterpart to the American President. Furthermore, the Australian by nature is forever wary of people with power and authority. But, even in the American context, Tim O'Brien assures me, the faculty of Madonna are atypical.

A number of faculty suggested that the explanation was to be found in the background experiences of the faculty and in their personality styles. (I would add the facts of high turnover rate and high work demands.)

> A. "Their background is as professionals, not as teachers. They haven't had experience in the procedures and governance of a higher education institution. So their reaction to any problem is to discuss it with a supervisor. Also, in decision-making, they're not skilled in the nature and function of committees..."
>
> B. "I think there are a number of types that all coalesce in the school to make it (the existing style of government) acceptable...
>
> "A large number of the faculty are nurses, and they're into a pattern...Then there are the Sisters, who think of themselves as owners--they go down if the school goes down... And they don't like conflict...
>
> "Most of the faculty are second income people...People like that aren't going to make lots of waves...
>
> "The thing that (these people) seek is benevolence."

I found ample support for these views. Some have never given any thought to decision-making processes or to their own possible involvement. From some, my questions drew total blanks. Others complained, "I think you're asking hard questions for me." Some thought on their feet. Still others didn't see such issues as their domain: "I wish they (the administration) would get their act together so I can get on with mine." And a few had decided that their own involvement would be misplaced: "I question whether (wide involvement) is necessary--in course development or in government."

Certainly the college has committees, more in the recent past than now. A number of faculty explained why the committees failed: the time involved, charges that were too narrow, decisions that were overridden.

"Why didn't the committees start by changing the charges?" I asked. The typical response was a gape. Two senior members of the Administrative Group offered quite different explanations for the failure of committees. As one saw it, "They (the faculty) had a chance to have power, but they didn't give a damn about it." From the point of veiw of the other: "Two years ago everyone wanted to be part of everything. If they can now give it up and see us for what we really are--including hot air and ego--that's good. It means the teachers are not as threatened by facetiousness, power ploys, and arbitrariness on the part of the administration. That's encouraging."

How does the existing system work? Tim O'Brien confirmed the picture I put to him. At Madonna, information for decisions, both in the policy and adjudicative domains, is passed up the line to the President and Vice President (and the Administrative Group), and the decisions are passed down. Thus interactions are typically vertical rather than horizontal (there is no horizontal sharing and little awareness of common concerns) and essentially secretive insofar as it is not open government. (The decisions and the information on which they are based--even on such matters as staffing and budgets--are not widely published.) I suggested to him that in Australia this would be interpreted as a deliberate strategy to divide and conquer--to keep people from sharing concerns so as to enhance the control and power at the top. I expressed my surprise that individuals at Madonna accepted that approach. "But they do," he mused as he dragged on his pipe.

The situation may change. There is a Faculty Welfare Committee and though its president found abhorrent my suggestion that it could serve as a

kind of union, the possibility exists. There is undifferentiated concern among faculty about tenure, workloads, future funding, and employment. There is unrest among some part-timers and general concern about the increasing use of part-time teachers. On the governance side, two of the people recently appointed to middle management--the Dean and the head of the Office of Development and Research--are deliberately and publicly working toward open government and wide involvement of faculty in planning and policy. Many factors mitigate against their success.

Let the President have the last word: "The fact is that decisions about what is going to be taught...and about hiring...are handled entirely by middle management and faculty. These are very central areas of decision."

Teaching, Learning and Caring

In the Medical Technician laboratory, six girls are busy with test tubes and big equipment. In the adjoining room two students are working through tape-slide programs on bacterial types. In the Science laboratory eight girls in a microbiology class are busy with microscopes and slide preparation. The instructor moves easily among them, then steps back for a while as they work, sharing yet working alone.

In the Medical Records simulation laboratory, the learning method is self-paced instruction--"Keller plan" to me. Two students are working together, going through a worksheet, browsing through files for information supposedly required in a legal case. Another student has just completed a mastery test and is discussing it with Sarah, the faculty assistant. This is the only program in the college that is entirely self-paced. Sarah is

available all day, every day--whether or not there are students--teaching, marking tests, keeping progress records.

Chris Jackson asked me to role-play a psychiatrist in an Occupational Therapy simulation class. When I went to her for help in preparation, she pulled out a thick book of lesson plans, taking me back for a moment to my B.Ed. studies. The situation was as follows. Debbie is a 20-year-old girl who has family problems and is a social misfit. Psychiatric counseling and occupational therapy are part of her treatment. In an earlier class, the group had observed a videotape of her (enacted) social behavior and had planned occupational therapy treatment. Today we watched a second videotape, evaluated her progress, and planned further treatment. But perhaps the central task in today's simulation was to develop and evaluate skill in interpersonal interactions. After the video was played, a single occupational therapy assistant (though played by four different students) conducted interviews with Debbie, her mother, the occupational therapy supervisor, and the psychiatrist. The whole class analyzed and evaluated each step. All the actors moved into their roles seriously, quickly, and well. The class analysis was critical of both interview content and style. And this was simulation, not reading prepared scripts.

In the central Audio-Visual center, only 16 of 90 carrels are in use. Two students are viewing film loops, checking worksheets as they go. Another 10 are working with tape-slide programs. Two are working with audiocassettes and worksheets. Another two are listening to tapes as they examine models. Madonna has "backed off a little" from the multisensory approach. As one faculty member put it, "It got to the point where students were learning how to carry out a therapeutic relationship by watching tape and slide shows on mental health." There are also

production problems: Keeping ahead of curriculum changes and within the copyright laws.

The swing is toward simulation--as a step between the classroom and the clinical setting--and toward competency-based approaches. The central philosophy remains experiential, individualized. It is propelled largely by the diversity of student ability and a desire to have all students succeed. (Indeed, only in the Nursing program is the attrition rate generally due to failure: about 20% of the Nursing students leave Madonna for this reason.)

The caring ethos permeates Madonna. (That alone would make it difficult for a faculty member to close her door to students.) Caring for the individual enters the curriculum in two ways: up front as the students study "the helping relationship" as a part of the health professions, and indirectly in the relationships fostered between faculty and faculty, student and faculty, and student and student.

For the student, the stage is set in the Admissions Office where professional commitment and willingness to care for others are central platforms in Admissions Counseling and where the personable style of Madonna is demonstrated and offered as one of the attractions of the college. No student complained to me that her expectations in this regard were not matched.

Faculty at Madonna, especially in the smaller programs, know their students well. I listened to three faculty in the staff lounge discussing a pile of exam papers. As they looked through papers, they shared and anticipated the triumphs and disappointments that individual students would feel in relation to overall grades and particular questions. They planned together to soften the blows and to provide remedial instruction.

Then there was Sister Freda:

> "I always work with my door open...
>
> "Now and again you might have a student poke her head in the door and say, 'Got a test, Sister. Pray.' And you say a prayer immediately, in case you forget.
>
> "You meet them later on, perhaps not for a long time...
>
> "(Faculty and staff) come here because they want to be here. They have something they want to share with other people. They want to help other people become professionals who can go out to help those who need help."

Students also help one another, through both the college-employed peer tutors and the informal network. Many students work in groups, often in the student lounge: "Like I'm good at anatomy, she's good at psychology, so we work together and help each other." The caring is also personal, of course, and this is especially important for the single parent students. After the end-of-quarter break, Helen reported, "I really missed college. Like, I was lonely. I just wandered around the house waiting for college to start again."

Perhaps most of the people are caring people before they come to Madonna and they determine the climate. Perhaps the caring ethos has grown according to Sister Joanna's vision as President or with the commitment to service of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Whatever the reason, there can be no doubt that it is evident.

Chapter 2

A Historical Perspective

As one of the Sisters put it to me:

> "It's probably true that people (outside) view the college as a church school and expect the Sister's role to be significant. The Sisters started Mercy Hospital and, out of the hospital, developed the old training school for nurses. That was before the turn of the century. The training school and the hospital were almost entirely staffed by Sisters--therewere very few laity involved--and we remained pretty well independent except for outside forces or standards.
>
> "During the first half of the century, it was very definitely a training school with the students working in the hospital and the emphasis on skills. In the early fifties there was that (societal) shift in emphasis to education in the profession rather than training in the skills. We got in line with that outside thrust, and the Sisters were sent away for their Master's, and a few for Doctorates...This change in approach, in a sense, set the stage for the junior college."

I talked to a number of the Sisters about themselves and the college, and it is a mistake to presume that they represent a single point of view. Much of this is in the nature of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. The Congregation is an apostolic one, demanding of a woman from the time she joins the Congregation that she manage a joint commitment to her religious life and to active ministry and service in society. The Sisters are not nuns because they take only "simple vows". The original goals for the Congregation were in the areas of health and education, and any woman who joined could expect to work in those areas. And as one Sister said, "The sixties and Vatican II Council changed all that. It turned everybody in the direction for which the Lord had given them particular talents and interests." This encouragement of individuality

led the Sisters into diverse areas of service according to social need and to withdraw from areas where the needs were already being met. It also permitted the individual considerable freedom to find her own balance point in the tension between her religious life and her life of service within society. One Sister suggested to me that, among the 26 Sisters at MJC, the diversity of world-views, lifestyles, philosophies of why they're here, philosophies of education probably exceeds the diversity of the Congregation as a whole. (I suspect also that it covers much of the spectrum within the entire faculty and staff at MJC.)

Sister Joanna, who founded Madonna in 1964 and continues as its President, originally joined the Congregation as a nurse and served overseas during the Second World War. She already held nursing and law degrees.

In 1958 she came to Madonna School of Nursing from Fargo to head the training program. This was the time when the philosophy was shifting from training to education, and she was one sent to acquire a Master's degree in education. It was during that time she conceived the idea of a junior college:

> "We started (work at the college) in '64 with a nucleus of people who had been together in the School of Nursing. They had shared the original idea with me--as soon as it entered my head I was discussing it with people. I made a proposal to our Religious Congregations and they said, 'Sure. Go ahead. We can't give you financial support but we'll give you all the moral support.' I wrote up the proposal and discussed it (with a few I know well on the University of Minnesota faculty). They tore it apart and we did it and redid it five or six times. After each time, I came back and talked with half a dozen people here..."

At that time the idea of the college was totally new and different: there were no patterns to follow. One of the Sisters said of Sister

Joanna, "I don't think we have too many people like that, but every now and then there are people with vision that rise to a specific problem in society." Her vision and her energy remain central at the college.

Sister Joanna tried to re-create for me the excitement of those first few years: building brand new curricula and gaining accreditation, equipping and adapting facilities rented from the hospital, recruiting faculty and staff, and enjoying considerable national attention. "I really was very much personally involved...Nobody dreamed up a course description that I didn't work through with them...I was involved in every aspect (of the college)--not only the curricula, but the organization, staining the furniture, and everything else." Tim O'Brien joined the college in 1964, and in 1965 brought to bear his own creativity and management skill as Assistant to the President, later to become Vice President.

It has become traditional in the character of Madonna to encourage individuality and to suffer a level of interpersonal tension conducive to innovation. The fruition of an idea, the answer to a question, the way decisions are made, depend largely on personalities and the informal interaction of personalities, though moreso in the past than now. Consequently, the process of change in the past has not been orderly, but rather "catch as catch can." In developing curriculum, this style has been very successful--largely because the college has been as prepared to scrap an idea or program that was unsuccessful or outgrown as it was to implement it. For a long time it was also a successful means of acquiring funds as individuals took initiatives to obtain many small, task-specific grants. (Madonna has an outstanding record in grant acquisition, with about 80% of proposals being successful. Its fiscal management has also been widely acclaimed.)

It has been less successful, however, when applied to the development of management structures.

The need for institution-wide structures and formalized processes for planning, grant acquisition, and management was recognized by Sister Joanna in the commission of the Long Range Planning Committee in 1973. The need was exacerbated when that committee's report was successfully converted into a proposal for Title III funds under the Advanced Institutional Development Program. Since then, the college has, in its typical exploratory style and with its typical dependence on personalities, tried a staggering number of organizational structures. For example, in 1975 when the head of the newly introduced Department of Development and Public Relations persuaded Sister Joanna that she needed a rank of Vice President to function effectively, she was left with two vice presidents in administration. She sought to correct the balance by creating two more Vice President positions and a Director of Technical Education as well. Two years later, all titles were suspended for a year because Sister Joanna was concerned that people were glorifying in their titles and protective of their areas: "all pretty foolish in an institution this size." (People retained their areas of responsibility, but not formal titles.) The situation proved very stressful, but "it gave us a chance to look at the total thing and re-do it." As I talk to faculty and staff about these struggles, I sense that it has been difficult for them to separate the personalities of particular people from the positions they hold and that this has complicated the search for an organizational structure.

A detailed history of the structural changes at MJC is provided in Edward St. John's case study of the institution, published by the USOE in

1977. It is interesting to note that the "Tenative Organization Structure, 1977-78" that he presents is only in rough accord with the existing structure in 1979.

What of the future? The President and Vice President foresee some decline (perhaps 3 or 4 percent per year) in student interest in the college, although the currently acute shortage of health care personnel is expected to continue. Thus, the worldwide contraction of higher education is less likely to significantly touch MJC. The college's success will continue to depend on the quality of its programs and its graduates. To ensure that quality, the college will contain its enrollment at the current level and will continue with its emphasis on personable attention and individualized, experiential learning.

MJC is determined to be one of the first institutions in the nation to wean itself from AIDP and to reduce its grant support from the current $600,000 per year to something closer to $50,000. (As well, the contribution of the Sisters of St. Joseph to the work force will likely decline.) The end of AIDP support undoubtedly implies a decreased rate of development. Consequently, faculty and staff currently employed on grant-specific projects will no longer be required in that capacity; but otherwise there is no reason to anticipate significant cutbacks in faculty or staff. Within the college, no doubt, curriculum innovation will continue at its heady pace, and experimentation with organizational structures and political styles will proceed more tentatively. The institution is defined by the individuals who comprise it, and the turnover rate is high.

Chapter 3

Special Issues

Coping with Change: The Case of Nursing

In the student lounge I introduced myself to a group of six freshmen from the Nursing program. I told them I was writing a description of the college and would like to hear their views. A 19-year-old girl with expressive brown eyes looked at me apprehensively and queried, "Are we allowed to criticize?" "Sure," I shrugged. The students looked sideways at each other, as if trying to decide who should go first. Then they launched into an attack.

On a second occasion I talked with three sophomores and listened with a sense of deja vu. Their tirade was cut short because they had to go to a class. As they picked up their books, one girl suggested that I set up a student meeting. "At least it'd give us a chance to vent our feelings!" The others concurred.

On both occasions the central criticisms were the same and were confirmed by counselors from Student Counseling and Admissions as being "fairly widespread". Rigidity, inconsistency, and poor organization. The students told me there was too little room for negotiation on test-taking procedures and on what constituted the right answer in a written test or a skills test. "You can write an answer (to a test question) that's straight out of a textbook and it's marked wrong because it's not the answer the instructor wants." The situation is compounded by inconsistencies between instructors: "One instructor will tell you this is the right way to do it (a technical skill) and another says, 'No, it should be done that way'...The same sort of thing happens with test questions."

The variations extended into policies or policy implementation; for example, the number of times a mastery test can be failed before it constitutes a fail in the subject or when particular requirements can be waived. The third area of student complaint was disorganization. For example, a sophomore student told me, "In a course I took in the summer there were lots of times when materials weren't ready. And it's not much better now (in the fall)!"

I talked with some of the Nursing faculty about these criticisms. Karen Armstrong nodded her head as she began:

> "No doubt students say the course is rigid. No doubt some faculty are rigid. But we have chosen textbooks, and students who read other textbooks, frankly, get confused. They probably ought not be reading other textbooks...
>
> "Often the point is that there are right answers and there are errors in textbooks. Also sometimes students misread..."

The problems of inconsistency, disorganization, and even rigidity can be dismissed as "growing pains" in a new and large program. The competency-based curriculum was introduced at the freshman level (to about 200 students) in 1978 and to the sophomores this year. In such an exercise it takes time to iron out philosophical variations, prepare new materials, and have the curriculum faithfully implemented. As Bee Carver explained, "The same course is taught by a number of different faculty and there's bound to be some variance when you've got that many people teaching the same course...We might give one test but have ten people teaching the course..." She added that from the student point of view, a certain amount of rigidity was probably helpful. "There's not room for them to see that there are various ways to answer if they feel like it: 'It has to be all the same because we might be tested on it'..."

I talked to four of the Nursing faculty, and each of them pointed beyond the "growing pains" explanation of the problems to division within the faculty. Karen Armstrong described personal conflicts:

> "The ones who taught in the old curriculum have always taught in the old curriculum and they kinda liked the old curriculum. Now they're in the new curriculum and 'Where is this?' 'Why didn't you keep that worksheet?'"

She also pointed to philosophical differences:

> "Some of (these) are being resolved now but not to anyone's satisfaction. For example, one woman always brings up the fact that in the old curriculum we always had (a particular topic). Now no one listens..."

Bee Carver voiced her perspective in a different tone:

> "What I have trouble with is that I'm not sure all this (change) is necessary or that it's leading to a better end. We have a lot of work to do to get the new curriculum developed to the point the old one was--though that's not to say the old one didn't need work done on it..."

To me, the antagonism and unhappiness which currently exist in the Nursing program reflect the tremendous stress that the innovation rate and political style of Madonna impose on individuals. That stress is most likely to manifest in Nursing because of the large number of people involved, and because the size of the program puts it under continual pressure from the rest of the college to boost or maintain the college's reputation.

The fortunes of the Nursing program have a history of waxing and waning. One low was in 1967. It resulted in a change of Director (Sister Joanna served in this position for a while) and the introduction of the AV-centered curriculum. A second low was in 1975. It was brought into college-wide focus by, among other things, a 10% drop in student pass rates on the State Board Examinations and a college evaluation that made harsh criticisms of the Nursing program. The results, once again, were a change in leadership and a new curriculum--this time the competency-

based approach. On both occasions, the new curricula were developed essentially by a project team and injected into the system: the process most likely to damage faculty morale.

The first step in developing the competency-based curriculum was to establish the list of competencies. This was done by a small project team who canvassed the literature and professionals in the clinics. Members of the original faculty were offended that they weren't considered "expert enough " to have input into that list: "We asked ourselves 'at what point will the Nursing faculty be asked what a competent nurse should do?' But that wasn't one of the steps used...The list was presented at a national meeting before we saw it." They did contribute to the conversion of the competencies to objectives and then to a "curriculum blueprint," but they felt that their contribution had little impact.

By the time the implementation date arrived, about half of the faculty were new and two subgroups were formed which soon became factious. There were a number of reasons for this. The new group saw themselves as being more in touch with current practice and were zealous in their approach to curriculum reform. The continuing group had already taken a battering. The new Director was brought in to lead the reform, the past directors were still in the continuing group. Members of the continuing group were often from a different generation, with a different kind of training, a different view of 'the ideal nurse,' and a different kind of commitment to both teaching and nursing.

The rift was exacerbated by the implementation process. Faculty were self-selected into two groups: one to see out the old curriculum with the sophomores, the other to introduce the new curriculum to the freshmen.

It might have been because of its logical appeal that most of the continuing faculty elected to see out the old curriculum. But a couple of them at least felt that they were given very little encouragement to try the new; they dearly wanted to.

"We're past the point of looking at that now..." said one of the continuing group. "I'm just blocking all of that out of my background..." said another. I wonder who at the college has the skill to resolve the situation in a way that will salvage self-esteem. What counts more: the mission of caring or the desire for change?

> "What do you see nurse, what do you see?
> What are you thinking when you look at me?
> A crabbit old woman, not very wise
> Uncertain of habit, with far away eyes
> Who dribbles her food, and makes no reply
> When you say in a loud voice, 'I do wish you'd try!'
>
> "But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells
> And now and again my battered heart swells.
> I remember the joys, I remember the pain
> And I am loving and living life over again.
> I think of the years all too few, gone so fast,
> And accept the stark fact that nothing can last.
> So open your eyes, nurse, open and see,
> Not a crabbit old woman. Look closer, see Me."
>
> (author unknown)

The Special Case of General Education

The General Education program at Madonna is of special importance for a number of reasons. First, it is the major means of providing that personal development that distinguishes the 'professional' from the 'nuts and bolts technician'; thus, it is central to the achievement of the college mission and is important in defining the uniqueness of the college. Second, it is the one program that impinges on every program and every student; in this

sense, it is the keystone of college unity. Third, it is large, so its success has ramifications for the whole college.

The problems it faces do not include student dissatisfaction with the courses; all the students I talked with spoke highly of it in general, and the counselors confirmed that impression. Instead, it faces the problems currently being argued anew in liberal arts colleges across America. What is the payoff? Once the student has "got it", what can she do with it? How do you measure effectiveness? What about the time it takes from more clearly useful studies? How do you organize it?

These questions permeate Madonna, pressing some, washing around others vaguely. They generate a widespread uneasiness for there are no ready answers or, it seems, anyone quite ready to champion a solution. Looking from the outside, I wonder whether confidence in the value of liberal studies might evaporate slowly to the point where groups like Respiratory Therapy (which already requires extra time to meet accreditation requirements) or Nursing decide to encroach time for their technical studies. The Educational Policies Committee is currently reviewing the nature and extent of liberal studies in the college.

Meanwhile the General Education program is in the melting pot as the faculty continues to explore changing the program theme from Teilhard's "Phenomena of Man" to Phenix's "Realms of Meaning". The idea of the change was bred three years ago at the faculty grass-roots level. It was pushed around the college informally until last summer when interest welled up to the point where a task force was established to formalize the arguments. Rob Johnson was pensive as he told me,

> "It seems like we spin our wheels a lot. It seems like we've been talking of curriculum renewal for three years. And it's on a piece of paper somewhere that we'll have it defined by spring quarter (1980). I don't think we'll have it done by spring quarter..."

Everyone I talked to about it had a theory as to why the development was proceeding at a pace so uncharacteristic of Madonna.

Some pointed to the diversity within the General Education group:

> "Within any of the technical programs, group decisions are natural because of shared content, testing and all kinds of tasks. But what can the General Education group share? Not details. So we tend to talk philosophy."

> "In a group as diverse as ours, Paul's kind of soft, conciliatory leadership is probably necessary."

> "Paul is trying now to be a little more authoritative. But before long a credibility problem arises...I don't think he knows how to handle it."

> "There are too many people who feel protective of their own bailiwicks."

Others pointed to the need for college-wide involvement:

> "When should the discussion go college-wide? Start too soon, you look foolish because you haven't got your act together. Neither have you got clear discussion points. Start too late, and it looks like you're imposing it."

Some blamed General Education leadership and "the General Education process":

> "We came to a vote on this issue recently. It was the first time...We never--in all the years I've been here--we never voted on anything. It was always...well, you got a sense, or a feeling (about opinion at the meeting) and you kinda looked at everybody else. Except that it really wasn't a consensus..."

> "There is a lot of discontent about the way it's being handled, and the fact that all of a sudden someone makes a decision. All of a sudden, you know, 'This is what we're gonna do.' 'When did we say we're gonna do that?' 'Who decided that?' 'Who said this was so good?' A small group of people..."

The change of theme of the General Education course was the main agenda item of a Program Directors' meeting I attended. A number of people at the meeting expected a progress report. Paul made a long speech, mostly at a philosophical level, about the special difficulties and problems which "liberal arts" education faces, about the college-wide ramifications of curriculum changes in General Education, and about the need for college-wide involvement in the development. When the time came for general discussion, the Dean (who was chairing the meeting) floundered for a debating point. Instead she gave a brief pep-talk on the need for faculty involvement on the issue and called for comments and questions. It was obvious as each Program Director in turn tossed in a comment or question that there was already wide interest. The whole tone of the meeting was supportive. Yet there was no clear idea to be argued at this stage. (A college-wide faculty meeting to sketch the rationale for the new curriculum and the way the new course might look is scheduled for January, 1980.)

Paul talked about the problem that the "Ways of Knowing" theme doesn't define a curriculum compartmentalized into disciplines the way the "Phenomenon of Man" theme does. In a sense it is this aspect which gives the new theme such appeal. It also implies that the new curriculum could be boldly innovative in its organization of content and might make formidable demands on the teachers. There is just a chance that Madonna might become an international trend-setter in teaching in the liberal arts.

The Impact of AIDP: Program Management and Evaluation

I asked many of the faculty and staff to list for me events that were most significant in the development of the college. At the top of everyone's

list was the impact of the mammoth federal grants that poured into the college (mostly through AIDP) since 1973. Apart from the obvious advantages for building improvements and equipment (actually not funded by AIDP) and for curriculum innovation and faculty development (advantages which most people swept aside as simply as that), the dominant impact was through the evaluation thrust and the injection of middle management into the organizational structure. These last two aspects were perceived as having both positive and negative influences, but it was the negative that people dwelt on. (It is also unfair to blame AIDP entirely for the growth of middle management and evaluation at the college; the institution in 1973 was at a stage in its evolution that made these expansions inevitable even without AIDP.)

Before AIDP, the organizational structure at MJC comprised the President (who was also Dean), the Vice President (also Treasurer) and the Program Directors. (Note that even now there are only about 90 faculty and staff, and the number was somewhat smaller then.) AIDP brought the introduction of middle management offices (with project-specific tasks) and their rapid expansion (with people working on specific sub-projects). These new offices--inseparable at Madonna from the personalities which hold them--upset the old order, and power struggles ensued. For example, the director of the first AIDP office, Susan Peters, had independent financial control (the AIDP budget was separate from the college budget), was administratively responsible for almost all of the curriculum innovations within the college and was centrally responsible for the hiring of project staff. In the financial area, her office was very powerful. Furthermore, it competed with that of the Vice President for Development and Public Relations (also created according to an AIDP

project). In the curriculum and faculty development areas, she competed with the Dean (who was also the President). From the faculty point of view, innovations and procedures were being thrust upon them with little opportunity to participate in decisions. Meanwhile, Sister Joanna, as President, was becoming further removed from the day-to-day operations. Nevertheless, she was aware that--again largely because of personalities--some projects and groups were being unfairly protected by Susan and her office. Sister Joanna intervened and, in her own words, "It brought enormous reaction from that office and I knew it spilt all over."

Ann Collins was hired by Susan. Her first major assignment was a college-wide evaluation of programs. She and an assistant spent a year talking with faculty, staff and students, conducting written surveys, and observing. As one faculty member said with a shudder, "It stirred up muddy waters." And that's putting it mildly.

The study was initiated, however, not by Susan, but by Sister Joanna: "What we had were...some remarkably good programs, extremely high quality... But some were not good--I mean they were really bad news...They had to be analyzed and I had to know where we were...I wasn't interested in putting attention on the strong ones, but I wanted to be sure. And we got a handle on what were some of the problems--in just a couple of areas...It was a very useful study--we'd be very ordinary without it."

She agreed that the study had upset a lot of people. Friction and stress had been building through the preceding years because of the rate and nature of the changes being made. Morale was low, but concern and friction were only generalized. Ann's study brought the issues into focus. "Finally I knew...And then it became manageable because it became focused."

A number of changes were made. Among them, Ann was made Director of Technical Education and later Dean. Her appointment and the ways she defined and carried out her duties aroused further animosity against her--partly because of her personality, partly because of her insight and incisiveness, partly because of her background, and partly because she worked in irregular ways. (For example, on a couple of occasions she assumed curriculum leadership in technical programs despite her lack of expertise in those areas.) At the same time, there is no doubt that it was Anne who established at Madonna a real role for middle management (especially the Dean's office) by making information more widely available and by starting the processes of bringing departments together. One faculty member said of that contribution, "I call it a convergence--pulling it all together as an organized cooperative effort."

Susan left the college in the fall of 1977 and Ann left in 1979. Perhaps it is learning from the past, perhaps it is because the past makes different things possible now, perhaps it is the swing of the pendulum, but the two women who currently hold those positions envisage their roles in ways quite different from their predecessors and quite similar to each other. Both wish to disperse power to the faculty and staff and offer instead leadership through coordination, management, and the provision of resources.

Ann's evaluation study of the college is only one instance of the evaluation thrust at the college. With any grant the college receives (and certainly AIDP), formal evaluation is mandatory. With AIDP the extent of evaluation and to a large extent the procedures are fairly clearly defined. Furthermore, one of the goals of AIDP is to institutionalize formal evaluation as a natural part of the development process.

Many faculty negatively perceive the evaluation thrust that came with AIDP:

> "People seldom experienced it as a personal way towards growth..."
>
> "We're running around doing a lot of **** that doesn't need to be done. For example, we've got a person employed just to write questionnaires!...It's so much baloney!"

They also complain that evaluations invariably dwell on weaknesses and that if commendations are there at all they are brushed through quickly:

> "The only time you ever get any feedback is when something goes wrong. And I've been here (twelve) years."
>
> "Everything in that report was negative--there was nothing positive."

The question surrounding any evaluation study, of course, is whether and how the information will be used. So it is not surprising that faculty evaluation is of the greatest concern to faculty.

Different individuals have different perceptions of faculty evaluation in the college. For some, it is just part of the game: it keeps you on your toes a bit, but isn't used. For others, even though it isn't used or probably even read, it is like a dossier and so contains a potential threat. And for still others, it is a real threat (though not necessarily to them personally), and weaknesses in the evaluation system are a source of concern. For Tim O'Brien, the information is certainly potentially useful:

> "It seems like once you get down on paper 'Hey. This is what the students are saying, this is what your peers are saying, this is what your supervisors are saying,' you've got two choices. I build a contract with you to improve your performance and thus get up to this level by this way and if you meet the contract terms, fine. If you do not meet the contract terms, consider yourself dead."

He said that this confrontive use of the faculty evaluation information was not especially widespread, realistic though the approach is. But the information I gathered from faculty was that it was hardly ever used at all.

I talked to no one who considered faculty evaluation improper or questioned the basic principle of Madonna's system (evaluation by students, peers, and supervisors.) Nevertheless, there is concern about the details of the system. For example, in the student evaluation of faculty, there are variations in the set of questionnaires used by different programs (which make college-wide comparisons difficult); and in the peer evaluation (where one staff member rates another) the system is open to abuse through subjectivity. In any case, faculty often feel that they do not have the expertise to criticize or offer suggestions to the teacher or class they are evaluating.

Even though there is confusion about whether faculty evaluation is for diagnostic and faculty improvement decisions, for employment decisions, or for naught, there is no doubt that the faculty development system at Madonna is alive and thriving. Faculty participate fully in the organized programs and take advantage of college resources. At the informal level, the spirits of cooperation, mutual interest, and sharing pervade the faculty group. And in the Office of Development, Evaluation and Research, the Director sees one of the main functions of the office in the future as being research to expand the resources of faculty for their development efforts.

Epilogue: The Family

Many of the faculty and staff refer to the college and its people as "the family". There are many interpretations of the metaphor, so whenever anyone used it, I asked them to explain it. All their interpretations contain a measure of insight. I have condensed them into three pictures.

In one view, it is the students who are the children. They pass fleetingly through the lives of their parents, are touched by them, guided by them. Then they go their own ways, taking with them their various lessons, to be built on or discarded. And sometimes they come home, fondly, perhaps to visit, perhaps to stay a while.

In a second view, the college itself, the "body corporate", is the child. She was conceived by parents dedicated to her success, who gave a lot of themselves, who grew older together in the task. Now the child is an adolescent--a crisis time for Mom and Dad, as well as for herself

Alternatively, it is the faculty and staff who are the children. The family group is basically caring, loyal, and supportive. The children squabble some as they try their wings, as they compete for Mom and Dad's favor. So too, the decision interactions are mostly vertical, with Mom and Dad deciding things of importance but a couple of the favored older siblings pitching in. (And what group of kids in a family like this could entertain union action?) The family's world is a very personable one, and this makes it susceptible to upset by the intrusion of a pushy aunt who comes to stay for a while. "Or," as one faculty member put it with a sly grin, "a long-lost cousin from Australia..."

II. Methodology

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY IN INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION

Introduction

This report is intended to complement the case study report of Madonna Junior College* by describing and discussing the methodology of that study. Just as the case study report is the story of a developing college, the framework for the present report is the story of my own introduction to and experiences with the naturalistic inquiry approach to evaluation. The use of naturalistic inquiry as a strategy in program and institutional evaluation is relatively new and is being widely discussed (eg. Hamilton, 1977; Guba, 1978). By adding to these discussions, I hope that this report will help others who seek to know more about the strategy or are thinking of using it in their own research.

There are two factors that will help readers better understand this report. First, naturalistic inquiry is a very personal kind of research and probably has a different impact on the novice than on someone experienced in the methodology. This was my first experience with the approach. Second, a number of circumstances combine to give me a special vantage point. On the one hand, my research training was in nuclear physics, which takes place in a beautifully contrived, high technology situation. For example, I have worked with a high energy particle accelerator, cryogenic equipment to handle liquid helium, banks of particle detectors, and a large computer interfaced with equipment to collect, manage, and analyze the millions of bits of information that we collected. On the other hand, I came to the participant observation experience with time (I was on sabbatical leave from Melbourne State College, a four-year teachers' college in Australia), with enthusiasm (for a methodology that was new to me and to educational evaluation), and with support and guidance right at hand

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*Malcolm, Cliff. It's a Matter of Caring: Madonna Junior College, 1979

(Professor Wayne Welch, who advised me throughout the project and was ultimately responsible for the study, had had previous experience in the case study approach** and continues to participate in national discussions on the methodology and its applications in evaluation).

Nature of the Study

Since 1973 Madonna Junior College has received federal government funds according to the Advanced Institutional Development Program (AIDP). In connection with the AIDP grant, Professor Welch was contracted by the college to serve as an external evaluator and evaluation consultant. The purpose and contribution of this particular study to an overall college evaluation was outlined in the research proposal, as well as in a memo (reproduced below) from the college administration to all faculty and staff members on November 12, 1979.

> ...The purpose of this study is to describe, from the point of view of faculty, staff, and students at Madonna's what happens at Madonna's and what is happening to Madonna's at this stage of the AIDP program. Cliff has requested permission to observe life at the college, to have informal discussions with students, faculty, and staff, to sit in on various classes and meetings, and to conduct interviews. His report...will be a collection of descriptions, anecdotes, and quotations chosen to offer a global understanding of life at

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**Case Studies in Science Education, Vols. I, II, III, 1979.

> the college and to highlight particular issues or concerns that are important in the college's development...Apart from direct assistance with current planning, the study will provide a baseline against which a later study might be compared and will also suggest aspects of the college on which other evaluation efforts might focus...

Personal Reactions to Methodology

I was totally immersed in the project over a four-month period from mid-October, 1979 to February, 1980. I spent the first month preparing myself through an intensive study of methodology. The next six weeks I lived at the college while I collected data. I then took a three-week break from the information I had gathered before I prepared the final reports. Except for the time during the three-week break, my life was dedicated to the project: a reaction that I suspect is common and natural given such personal involvement in the data collection.

Despite intensive preparation for the study, I was surprised by a number of my reactions to the methodology. One was my conviction about the accuracy and validity of the results; in other words, my belief that any other researcher could confirm or authenticate the findings. In many ways I am more confident of the results and interpretations in this case than I have been in my nuclear physics research, where systematic errors introduced through instrumentation and even computation mistakes are not easily identified by the most meticulous research teams. Other unexpected reactions related to the tremendous

memory load and the constant demand to record the manifold aspects of each observation session, interview, and experience. In addition, I struggled with a variety of personal responses that were contained in the "insider/outsider" conflict: the agony of trying so hard to "see as others see" that those perceptions became a part of you; the loneliness of denying yourself response by personal contribution and therefore missing a genuine sense of sharing; the distastefulness (to me) and the strain of forever manipulating people and strategizing to obtain new information or to confirm ideas and interpretations that are already suspected. Finally, there was the anguish of writing the final report in full knowledge that it was a permanent document with implications for the individuals who took me into their confidence--and there was no hiding behind impersonal questionnaires or statistical tests of significance. Since completing the study, I have found that others report similar reactions to mine (Glazer, 1972).

Preparation for the Study

The month I spent preparing for this study was devoted almost entirely to an examination of methodology. From the books and articles listed in the bibliography, I made extensive notes under five headings. The summaries below are not intended to be comprehensive, but they offer an indication of my position when I began work in the field.

The philosophical basis of naturalistic inquiry. Apart from wishing to understand the method, I was keen to identify the domains of information that the naturalistic method could tap more effectively than quantitative methods. Finding such areas suggested to me that naturalistic and quanti-

tative methods are complementary rather than dichotomous or even competitive. (It is interesting to note that in cultural anthropology, the traditional stronghold of naturalistic inquiry, there is considerable pressure to use experimental approaches; (see, for example, Naroll & Cohen, 1973).

A central characteristic of the naturalistic method is that it admits the full complexity of the natural setting. It recognizes a variety of perspectives as valid (perceived) truths and does not attempt to simplify the situation in advance through a few testable hypotheses. Thus it makes few a priori (or hypothesis-based) constraints on the selection of variables and conditions for study. It also allows for the full dynamic interplay among variables which describe the individuals and the environment in which they act. This method is therefore particularly suited for the study of processes, including institutional development, teaching, and learning.

Research design and data collection. Under this heading I considered the basic skills of observing, interviewing, and note-taking. I also studied the more complex issues of sampling; striking a balance between the roles of insider and outsider and between those of participant and observer; and, in the context of naturalistic inquiry, establishing validity and maintaining objectivity.

From my experience in physics research I knew that I could not hope to find simple recipes for research methodology or experimental design. However, I needed more guidance than was offered by Hamilton (1977) and other of the "New Evaluators" in their advocacy of approaches which are "eclectic, adaptive, and responsive to the learning milieu." I turned to ethnography and investigative journalism for more detailed instruction and a clearer framework.

When asked to define the scientific method, physicist Percy Bridgeman replied that it was "doing one's dammedest with one's mind, no holds barred."* Great though the demands may be on the individual physicist, they are even greater on the naturalistic inquirer. There are two basic reasons for this. First, the method requires a great deal of personal sensitivity and an ability to make instantaneous decisions on the basis of a flood of perceptions; in other words, it demands what might be described as a "sixth sense." Margaret Mead, for example, emphasizes the need to be able to sum up a person's character, likely ideologies, allegiances, and so forth within moments of the first meeting. (Naroll & Cohen, 1973) The second reason is that for much of the time the research methods and therefore the quality of the data are decided as you go; there is no opportunity to deliberate on them or to discuss them with colleagues. Because of these extreme challenges, Mead also suggests that good ethnographers are born not made; and Robert Bogdan (1972), even in his "how to do it" book, states that the only way for an individual to learn the method is through field experience.

Techniques of data analysis. The basic strategy is to sort the data piece-by-piece into categories and then to identify connections among them via generalizations or hypotheses. It is natural and even inevitable that data collection and data interpretation proceed together. This implies a progressive focusing of the study, as well as waves of exploration and confirmation, of convergence and divergence. As a result, categories need to be redefined periodically as different meanings emerge or take shape.

*Bridgeman, Percy. "The Prospect for Intelligence" The Yale Review, 34, p. 450, 1945.

It is difficult to find a clear definition of "category" in the literature. Furthermore, use of that word varies from author to author. According to Bogdan (1972), a category is simply a bin for classifying data. Thus any piece of information may fit into a number of categories; for example, a criticism made by a student could be classified under "students", "individualized instruction", "faculty commitment", etc. To others, such as Guba (1979), the category assumes the nature of a variable; for example, "level of student satisfaction." Categories defined this way should be mutually exclusive and should span the data set.

Guba's system is clearly more difficult to work with. Because of its explicit theoretical base, it is closer to experimental approaches, but with the theory introduced post hoc and grounded in the data. There is a greater risk of theory constraining the data interpretation; but, on the other hand, interpretation is pushed beyond description to higher levels of explanation.

Theoretical bases to aid data interpretation. Recognizing the dangers of biasing the data collection and interpretation through preformed theories, I accepted Parson's (1976) view that an atheoretical approach was neither possible nor desirable. Language and perception are based in theory. I had worked for many years in a four-year college similar to MJC, and it was inevitable that I had developed theories which would influence my observations and perceptions. I sought to heighten the insight of my perceptions by surfacing and studying theories that I expected to be relevant and to minimize bias by studying a wide range of theories.

I read in a number of areas: the nature of culture (considering the social system of the institution as a subculture), political theory (power, authority, and decision-making at both the formal and informal levels), theories on the development and nature of higher education institutions, and symbolic interactionism. Several pertinent questions arose from symbolic interactionism; for example, what is the nature and variety of individual perspectives within the college, how are they formed, and how does their interaction relate to the organization's overall effectiveness.

I also read a number of college publications (The Bulletin, some planning documents, and some AIDP reports) to become more familiar with that institution.

Report writing. To clarify what I was setting out to do, I studied the sample reports presented in Hamilton (1977) and, especially, the complete reports offered by "Case Studies in Science Education: Volume 1, The Case Studies" and the discussions that followed them. I became convinced that the report should reflect the methodology. In other words, it should be personable and heavily dependent on word pictures, anecdotes, and quotes; the basic pictures should develop, expand, and become clearer but not dramatically different as the report continues.

In addition to the case studies, I turned to books on journalism and the feature article. I readily adopted a slogan offered by one of them: "Show, don't tell."

On November 9, I discussed the methodology with Wayne for the last time before beginning data collection a few days later. (We had met to

discuss issues many times throughout the project.) In preparation for that meeting, I wrote to myself the following memo.

Memo 11/9/79

Questions important to planning--in no particular order

1. What determines the scope and focus of the study?
2. Should I talk with, for example, the director of the college's Evaluation Office to find a focus that they feel would be most useful?
3. To what extent is my goal to "merely describe"? To evaluate? To theorize? If to theorize, at what level of explanation? Descriptive generalization? Explanation within domains? Between domains? College-wide?
4. To what extent am I interested in products, or context, or process?
5. Politics, power, authority, management. To what extent would the study and elaboration of these aspects have a damaging influence?
6. What will constitute the most useful categories for data analysis and report synthesis? Structural (administration, faculty, students, etc.)? Programs? Process goals? Process activities? Issues? Concerns? Role and role interactions?
7. What sampling plan: random stratified, judgmental stratified, or opportunistic?
8. To what extent do I concentrate on "stars", workers, and in what order?

A second memo was entitled "Research Plan", but said only "Step 1: start slowly by observing, getting oriented, being highly visible--about two days."

Although Wayne and I spent over an hour discussing those two memos, we didn't resolve much; however, just talking them through was enormously helpful to me.

In The Field

The First Day

"Be sure to record the flood of first impressions," the books had advised me. Practicing this during the bus trip from downtown to the college, I tried to absorb that area of the city and to imagine the lifestyles there; I looked for both general pictures and details of the setting. From the bus stop I walked in the snow through acres of parked cars; I finally approached the bleak hospitals and the junior college among them. Observation, interpretation: I was more keenly aware than I had ever been in my life, and I was enjoying the stimulation of it!

Henry Jackson was my host at the college. We had arranged to meet at 9:00 a.m. and I was early. I made my way to his office, still practicing awareness and encouraging every impression to the surface. Henry wasn't in his office, but the one next to his was open: A coffee cup, a college telephone directory, and the memo announcing my arrival was sitting on the desk. This was my office. I closed the door, took out my dictaphone, and recorded my first impressions. They transcribed to three pages of notes.

Henry arrived. We started chatting, but the whole time I was making mental notes of our conversation! At 9:20 he led me off on a guided tour that lasted an hour and made my head spin; he showed me laboratories, resource centers, offices of key personnel, service centers, and lounges. Along the way he talked and talked about programs, students, educational philosophies, and evaluation strategies; much of it was in American style,

loaded with acronyms such as MLT and OTA. We also met a few faculty and staff members en route. I struggled to keep it all together.

We got back to my office at 10:20. Henry suggested that we meet a few key people such as program directors. I declined the offer, saying that I wanted to start at the bottom and slowly. I also needed to record and write.

I sat down in my office and made notes of the discussions we had between 9:00 and 9:20. Then I retraced the tour with a pad in hand, sketching maps, trying to recall conversations at each point along the way, and observing afresh as I went. I did that twice and then sat down to read through my comments and record on the dictaphone all I had learned. I finished at 12:20 exhausted.

That record transcribed to seven pages of cryptic notes. On the back of one page I wrote in anguish,

> The memory load is tremendous! Recalling people and names, building layout and function, dialogue and argument. I had been afraid of my inability to observe and listen; but that problem, at least on this first day, pales in the face of memory load.

The observing-remembering problem was never again quite as severe. This was partly because, as time went by, there was less that was novel and partly because, as meanings became clearer and understanding grew, significant comments and events were most easily recognized and remembered. But it was mainly because from then on I limited observations and discussion sessions to about 45 minutes and retreated immediately to my office to make notes.

Note-taking.

Bogdan (1972) warns that one hour of fieldwork may require two or three hours to recall and record. He also warns against observing more than you can record. To aid recall, he suggests that during observation sessions you periodically change positions in the room or otherwise raise "time flags" or situation changes. Back in your office you make notes of whatever you can remember, spacing them along a time-line; you sit back and let your memory flow until you've finished the notes. And finally you put them down on paper or on tape in narrative prose. He further advises that you immediately record things that are half-remembered or partially understood, because tomorrow is another day.

I followed his suggestions; and, in retrospect, I'm glad I did, despite the frustration of spending so much potential observation time recording. Indeed, one of the main values of recording as you go is the inevitable analysis that accompanies it.

Bogdan (1972), Mean (Naroll and Cohen, 1973), and others advise recording in enormous detail. I read samples of their notes: The weather; the setting; the room decor; what people are wearing, what they looked like, their personalities; one's own mood, reactions, and feelings; details of conversations (no matter how mundane) were all recorded in full prose. In my preparation notes I had scrawled across a page, "Is this really necessary?" I'm still not sure that it is. Perhaps it is a tradition bred from studying totally novel cultures. Perhaps it is because researchers other than the observer might be responsible for a variety of analyses or because analysis may follow years after the observations were made. I did keep very full notes, at one level of detail on the dictaphone and at a second level on paper; but I generally avoided details of dress or of

irrelevant conversations, for example, of the weather. To me, the test of my notes was whether events or comments that weren't recorded in the observation notes came to mind as I wrote the final report.

Phases in the Research Plan

A number of phases can be identified in the overall research strategy. The end of each phase was marked by a decision point; however, in every case, the need for a decision, as well as the decision made, was based as much on "sixth sense" perceptions as on clear evidence or data requirements.

Phase I: Unobtrusive measures.

During the first few days, my intentions were to seep into the institution, to observe and infer, and to let my impressions emerge rather than have them forced on me by a few people. I wanted to orient myself to the college and to allow persons there to orient themselves to my presence.

I walked up and down corridors, rode the elevators, peered into or entered classrooms, and sat in the various lounges. I greeted people whenever I was given the smallest opening. I counted rooms and the number of them being used; I counted seats and the number of them that were occupied. I made notes on what individuals anywhere appeared to be doing. I read bulletin boards. I browsed through student assignments that had been left out for collection.

I eavesdropped without mercy. Faculty and especially students often worked in the lounges. I took advantage of this custom to record conversations. Surrounding myself with books and notepads at a table, I pretended to work; but I was actually writing down whatever I could overhear. I

wondered what students talked about over coffee: boyfriends, their families, women's rights, or coursework? And faculty, do they discuss world politics, movies, what they did last weekend, the vice president or anyone else who isn't there, or classes and students?

I introduced myself to groups, usually comprising three or four persons, and tried either to simply join their conversations or to direct them to areas of my general interest and then let the others lead on. I tried to keep such conversations short (about 15 minutes) and, consequently, consumed vast amounts of coffee.

The strategy was painful for me; I was indeed snooping, though in a very open and breezy way. It is not my natural style to introduce myself to a group of individuals who probably have no interest in getting to know me. A saving factor was my success at remembering names and details, despite the fact that there were occasions when I was introduced to six or eight persons at a time and to a total of 15 within a half hour. By the third day I could greet by name perhaps 30 to 40 persons that I met in the corridors or in the lounge; personally that was satisfying to me and to others. Another advantage was that I was an Australian with a funny accent and therefore appeared to be deserving of hospitality.

Snooping skills were ones I really didn't have. My search for models is shown by an entry I made in my log book on November 20:

> I'm afraid that I'm too transparent: I don't have the spy's skills of seeming to be asleep yet missing nothing, nor Columbo's skill of mumbling around among activities distracting to the informants while I observe, interpret, and theorize.

In spite of the hazards, this phase of the study was very successful: Numerous snippets of information, ostensibly unrelated, came together in my head to make my first picture of the institution a global one and distinctively my own. Of course, the details, the connections, and the meanings within that picture were yet to be found. But my purpose was to present an outsider's perspective of the institution; and even by the fourth day, I was confident that my view of the college, unclear as it seemed to be, was my own and not that of any particular faculty member or other insider.

There were several reasons for abandoning the first ("orientation") phase of the study. One was that I had achieved my purpose. On the second day I wrote, "I'm concerned whether I'm going to come up with anything 'significant' this way..."; and on the third day I wrote, "...what I will eventually need is evidence, not summary impressions." The time I had in which to complete the study was limited and pressed me to begin serious interviews.

Another reason for proceeding to the next phase was that I was suffering personally from the strains of snooping, of interacting with so many different persons in a day, and of remembering and recording snippets of information the potential value of which I could not judge. A final reason was that I sensed mounting suspicion about my presence; suspicion that might destroy the whole study.

The loneliness problem was acute. On November 20 I wrote,

> This is a very lonely life--it's the insider/ outsider conflict. I can't afford to align myself with any person or group. Every interaction (even lunch with Henry Jackson or riding on a bus with a

> student) is clouded by the needs to observe, remember, record, and by the aspects of strategy in everything I do or say. I'm afraid that I'm too transparent...

I eventually had to solve the loneliness problem. I chose a confidante at the college. Her sense of humor and unassuming style appealed to me; she also had the time and was fairly accessible. There were, of course, hazards associated with this decision, and I seriously contemplated them beforehand. One was that her ideas threatened by own objectivity. I attempted to avoid that by regarding her as a sounding board for my ideas and only seldom as a source. I made very few notes of our conversations to avoid considering her as a source (and also because the whole point was to have someone with whom I could relax). In addition, I tried to keep our discussions short (about five minutes); and, indeed, brief boosts were all I needed. A second hazard was the price I had to pay: she knew what I was learning and what I was thinking. That was her "reward".

I also confronted the problem of mounting suspicion, but only after battling with it for several days. My personal problem was to decide whether my sixth-sense perception of suspicion reflected the acuteness of my senses or my own paranoia. I had not an ounce of clear evidence that there was antagonism, only a feeling. For example, on November 14 I wrote, "The problem is that if I don't talk enough I'll arouse too much suspicion..." And on November 15 I wrote, "I need to talk more with people to allay suspicions about my presence and purpose."

By November 20, apart from my perceptions, my only evidence of suspicion was as follows.

(a) In the late afternoon on November 14, I introduced myself to three middle-aged nursing faculty members in the faculty lounge. One greeted me, "Oh, you're that Australian!" We talked for perhaps two minutes about my project before I turned the conversation to purely social topics such as kangaroos and the cost of nursing homes. At the end of that two minutes my impression was that they had only the haziest idea of what I was doing, even though they had all read the memo introducing me and the project. I also felt that they were generally suspicious of evaluators and that they were concerned about whom I represented.

(b) On November 20, after a group of us had finished lunch, a woman hung back and confided to me her observation and concern that people would "role-play" in my presence and tell me "the right things". We had discussed the problem for five minutes when she suddenly closed the confidence and left with the comment, "But I'm probably talking too much!" Why did she say that?

By the middle of that night I was convinced that the study was in jeopardy unless I took direct action. The following day I published a memo with four distinct purposes. The first was to dispel rumors (if they existed) by describing exactly what I had done so far. The second was to define (again) my purposes and responsibilities. The third was to give a little of myself. And the fourth was to help them anticipate Phase II and thus encourage their participation in it. In consultation with Henry Jackson, I decided to print the memo on the ditto machine rather than the Xerox machine. I contemplated handwriting it, in favor of self-revelation but settled for typing in favor of readability. The memo is reproduced below.

November 21, 1979

TO: All Faculty, Faculty Assistants and Staff

FROM: Cliff Malcolm

RE: Participant Observation Study

Thank you for the hospitality and the freedom that you have extended to me since my arrival here last week.

During the four days that I have been at Madonna Junior College I have learned my way around the buildings, picked up some of the local jargon (like OTA, MLT, etc.), talked with about 12 students and 25-30 faculty and staff, dropped in on 6 classes (only informal-type laboratory classes so far), and attended a luncheon/conference organized by the OTA Faculty. I have borrowed books from the library, looked at a couple of tape-slide presentations, learned from a film loop how to bandage an arm, pulled apart (and hopefully re-assembled) a plastic man in the anatomy lab, operated a serrufuge, drunk a lot of coffee, and lost one game of table-tennis.

My official role here is as external evaluator/evaluation consultant, as part of the AIDP program. My intention is to carry out a participant observation study of MJC at this point in time---to describe what happens here from the points of view of the people who work here, to capture in print the "spirit" or "beat" of the institution. The study in itself is thus descriptive, not judgmental.

A number of people (6-8) have asked me directly whom I represent in undertaking this study, and a statement may be helpful. I do not represent the federal government, nor any particular group within MJC (such as the senior administration or the Office of Development, Evaluation and Research). My report and all my notes will be submitted to MJC, and I see my responsibility as being to all faculty, staff and students here. My report will be generally available and, I hope, widely read. It will be valuable to the extent that it accurately portrays life and work at MJC and identifies the hopes, concerns, pleasures and issues that are currently significant. As such it should be helpful in the ongoing processes of planning, management and evaluation.

My interest in MJC is also a personal one. My own institution, Melbourne State College in Australia, is a 4-year Teachers' College. Somewhat like MJC it is committed to both personal and professional education, the programs include "clinical experience", and faculty's work focus is on teaching and professional involvement rather than research.

In my time at MJC so far, my purpose has been introduction and orientation. After the break, I hope to begin more extensive conversations and interviews and to continue observation. (I would appreciate notice of meetings or activities which, if I can share in them, will benefit the study. I have a mail box in the mail room and outside my office, N714. My phone extension is 360.)

Thanks again for your welcome.

Cliff Malcolm

I'll never know how much the memo was really needed, but it's impact was certainly positive: People enjoyed it (and the implication that I perceived a need for it), earlier suspicions evaporated, and my rapport with the faculty soared. Phew!!

In my notebook, along with my analysis of the situation at the time, I wrote, "If I am accurate in perceiving the need for this memo, then perhaps this perception in itself says something about MJC." I later discovered that in 1975 the college had been torn apart by a college-wide evaluation that was commissioned by the president. The methodology of that study was similar to mine; the report, however, was clearly judgmental. Two researchers had spent a year on that project, analyzing all programs and "leaving few stones unturned."

Phase II: Mostly interviews.

Phase I had consisted of five observation days. Phase II, which began on December 3 (after Thanksgiving and the quarter break), included ten observation days and took me to the end of the data collection period. That was as much time as I had available.

A variety of interviewing styles were used throughout this phase in response to roughly defined turning points in the general strategy. For the first two days, the interviews I conducted were relaxed and conversational. I resisted the temptation to use a tape recorder or a notepad: The climate I wished to create was free, discursive, and exploratory. I took advantage of my "ignorance" about the institution. I was after "broad brush" views that I hoped either would provide impressions that I could compare with my own or would suggest areas for later inquiry. Just as I

had earlier avoided persons who were well-qualified to generalize, I now sought them out: the president, student counselors, and program directors.

By the third day I was reasonably at ease with interviewing and confident of my rapport with the faculty and staff. I also had pictures emerging of generalizations, issues, and concerns. Since the pressing need now was for irrefutable quotes to provide evidence, I started using a tape recorder during the interviews. The interview style also shifted to match the new purpose; it became a mixture of a divergent and an exploratory style with convergent questionning to seek and clarify meanings. One outcome was a confirmation of the broad view of the college that I had previously gathered; I also became aware of some key events and issues that seemed to be of wide concern. You stir the pond and the water gets muddy.

Beginning on December 11, my research style was often like that of an investigative reporter: I reread transcripts of interviews, studied other evaluation reports, tried to understand the history of the college, and chased issues through interviews. These interviews were almost always carefully planned. I attempted to pace and time them so as to land on sensitive points and then retreat for a while if necessary. This investigative strategy, however, brought its own problems for me. One was that I was becoming personally involved with these individuals. They were giving openly and candidly; I was giving almost nothing, except the report I would write that had the potential to affect their lives in a number of ways. I became concerned about justice and about people. A second problem was my nagging concern that I was limiting the scope of the study by chasing a few theories through convergent interviews. During those interviews I gave the respondents little opportunity to volunteer issues that they thought were most important. Horror! The issues I was chasing might only be dragons and time was running out!

For the last three days of the data collection period I returned to mostly exploratory interviews so as to check the scope of my work. I went to such interviews hoping that whole new leads would not be generated. The greatest relief came with an interview with one particular woman. During our brief encounter when we made an appointment for the interview, she impressed me as one who had thought long and seriously about the college during the many years she had been on the faculty (even though she had not held management positions). I started the interview by admitting my concern about the scope of the study; I told her that she was completely free to identify issues and to theorize on meanings. I asked questions like, "Tell me about events that have been especially significant in the development of the college." I then waited as the tape recorder hummed quietly in the background. She was clear and incisive; her prose fell into sentences and paragraphs. She separated observation from inference; she presented her own theories. And to my joy, there was nothing especially new. I had reached a natural finishing point in terms of my brief. This interview left me with the final major decision: Now I know, but what do I write?

Interviewing

Interview paradigms.

I reached out for exemplary models many times during the research, and I realized as never before how much of our behavior is learned through imitation. When I began Phase II on December 3, I wrote,

> I have switched my working style now to the 'reporter paradigm.' I expect it sometimes will be the feature writer, sometimes the investigative reporter. My first concern

is to learn to interview; to put to good use
the books I have read on journalism.

There is, however, a variety of interview paradigms both within and beyond journalism. One issue that I never resolved satisfactorily was how much I should say during the interview. Ethnographers advise that it is a mistake to admit that you know very much at all, and I can see the reasons for that. First, you constrain the scope of the interview and dilute the evidence to yes or no confirmations of your own viewpoints; and these, in the colloquial situation, may be communicated with only rough accuracy. Second, in a sense you enter into a competition with respondents and may even arouse their antagonism by shifting the ego center from them to yourself. Third, you are giving away the results of your work before they have been completely thought through. Thus, on the one hand, you are giving certain individuals power that is improper; and, on the other hand, you are enhancing the risk of collusion. But you pay a price for keeping your own knowledge to yourself: you limit discussions to a low level of explanation. To put the problem another way, when my 10-year-old son asks me about nuclear energy, the answer I give to him is totally different from the one I would give to a physics colleague. In short, if you want insightful answers, you have to show that you're equipped to understand them. This fact is at the heart of investigative reporting. For example, reporters might present several pieces of information with an air of confidence that leads the informant to believe (falsely) that they have the whole story; ideally this will then induce the informant to supply the pieces that are actually missing. Alternatively, reporters might present an interpretation or even a fact as though (again falsely)

they already have proof of it, whereas confirmation of it then would be their first piece of evidence.

I worked hard on interviewing techniques, exploring the uses of different paradigms for different persons and different purposes. I often used the ethnographic style. At other times the style was natural, conversational, and designed to give individuals the pleasure of talking about things they thought were important, thereby giving me either new leads or volunteered (rather than elicited) confirmations. Sometimes I used the "television news" reporter approach where exchanges were crisp and to the point. Occasionally I aimed for an interrogatory style in which I systematically eliminated alternatives and led to particular confirmations through planned sequences of questions. And sometimes I tried the "bluff" techniques described above where I led respondents to believe that I had more information than was actually the case.

Most of the time, however, I resisted the temptation to try to be clever. First, given my own lack of skill and the intelligence of the persons with whom I was working, there was too much risk involved. Second, it was unnecessary. The persons I interviewed, almost without exception, were determined to be cooperative and candid; and this was generally true even on sensitive issues. A number of journalism books suggest that such cooperation is invariably the case. The theory presented in explanation is that, for a variety of reasons, individuals find the interview situation flattering. They especially do, the theory says, if the interviewer is an attentive, respectful listener who gives them sufficient freedom to be expressive. I know nothing of the validity of this theory, but I am convinced of the value of the interview strategy it suggests.

Strategy, strategy, the burden of strategy. Two days before I left the college, I went to Henry Jackson and suggested that we have lunch together. We had eaten together on previous occasions, and I had interviewed him at other times. He consulted his calendar; "There's no chance for lunch," he said, "but how about an 8:30 interview tomorrow morning?" "Hey," I said, "I've finished with data collection--this is purely social!" A weight lifted from his shoulders as he raised his head and beamed with pleasure. I shared the feeling, but had we been able to have lunch together it would have been necessary to avoid any mention of my study or the college.

The interview process.

In retrospect, the key to interviewing (at least in my study) was not the choice of paradigms; rather, it was the minute-by-minute decisions that were made during each interview. I tried hard to find a posture, an interaction style, and a line of questioning that would encourage the respondent to talk confidently and freely but would nevertheless leave me a large share of control. I'm not sure I did it well. It's interesting to replay the tapes and hear a slightly different "me" with each respondent. The variations were only partially a result of the interview's purpose; they were more a response to different personalities. One woman was happy to provide facts, but she was uneasy with offering interpretations or insights. (I asked her to document some history and we did manage insights along the way.) One person liked exchanges that were spiced with witticisms; another preferred brusque efficiency. One person liked to wander through convoluted asides and anecdotes; another preferred that I ask essentially yes/no questions. At different times I was gentle, coaxing, brash, insolent, nervous or overconfident. For the most part these variations were neither conscious

nor deliberate; rather, they were natural reactions in very personal situations.

When I replay my tapes I am unhappy with many of the interviews. Here I talked too much, there not enough; here I misunderstood, there I ignored a lead that should have been followed. And on too many occasions I was unable to refrain from a habit I have of guessing what speakers are about to say and then cutting them off in the middle of their sentences. In one sense these kinds of criticisms are unfair. The models often used to judge a taped interview are those from television or radio; but these models are only sometimes appropriate in a naturalistic inquiry situation. In a natural conversational setting, individuals are probably quite tolerant of personal idiosyncracies and the difficulties of good communication, especially if they perceive the the interviewer is sincerely attempting to understand what they're saying.

Nevertheless, there were two standard interviewing tricks that I used frequently with success. One involved the use of silence. After a respondent had made a point, I sometimes simply waited expectantly in complete silence. The person's reaction was to elaborate or extend (even though the question seemed to have been answered) or to initiate a new discussion. The second trick was "the informal afterthought". After I had formally closed an interview or had turned off the tape recorder, I visibly relaxed and thanked the respondent; then I started for the door very slowly, either waiting to see if further comment was forthcoming or stopping at the door and saying apologetically, "Oh, one more thing..."

Use of the tape recorder.

My impression was that the tape recorder was not particularly intrusive

for most persons, except perhaps for the first few minutes. (I usually attempted to ease through those first few moments by talking myself; that is, by outlining my purposes for that particular interview and relating them to the respondent's qualifications to answer.) Nevertheless, I am aware of at least one exception: a woman with whom I had talked on several occasions during the first few days when she showed me around and had coffee with me. Near the end of the study I made an appointment with her and took my tape recorder to the interview in her office. I wished to gain information on interpretations and meanings. She was uneasy from the start and actually made notes throughout my introductory speech! I had to revamp the interview in order to salvage it. We talked about it later; she had not realized that in those first days I had been making mental notes during our conversations. In the later interview situation it was as much the formality of "questions at an appointed time" as it was the tape recorder that set her off balance.

In spite of the obvious advantages, there were disadvantages to using a tape recorder. One, which I corrected after the first attempts, was my own reaction to listen less carefully. Knowing that everything was being recorded, I tended either to relax my attention or to start thinking about my next question. The second was that the words and the intonations within phrases tended to become the sole record of the interview. I tried to counter this by transcribing the tapes as soon as possible after the interviews so that I could both fill them out with observations where necessary and analyze them in preparation for later interviews.

Participating and observing.

Even with assuming the role of a student, a faculty member, or a

staff member, I tried to minimize my "participation" in the institution. The stance I aimed for was, "In the institution but not of it."

In social conversations and in interviews I resisted the temptation to enter discussions on educational philosophies, teaching methods, or similar topics. (I made an exception with only one person: the vice president. We enjoyed a couple of discussions on trends and issues in higher education in which we compared the Australian and United States situations.) I tried to keep my contributions strictly to data collection and therefore offered my ideas, reactions, or knowledge of the institution only where I judged it necessary to elicit meaning, confirmation, or a higher level of understanding. Even on social occasions such as the faculty and staff Christmas party, I was much more an outsider than an insider.

On one occasion I actually participated in a class: I role-played a psychiatrist in a simulation exercise. My active participation, however, probably contributed nothing to the study that simple observation would not have achieved; instead, because of the ego involvement, it may have reduced the possibilities for observation. I resolved not to try it again.

For the same reasons I did not participate as a student in the classes I observed. I did operate equipment, view audio-visual materials, and answer worksheets; but I always did these things alone and more with the purpose of appraising the materials than of behaving as a student.

One approach to naturalistic inquiry is to "see as others see" while disturbing the natural setting as little as possible. I believe it is possible to gain the rapport and respect necessary to achieve that perspective without actively participating the way that "insiders" do.

Sampling.

I am convinced that an attempt at random stratified sampling in this study would not have been worth it. Even in retrospect it is difficult to define subgroups in the college, apart from the broad categories of administrators, teachers, and support staff. For example, the viewpoints of the Sisters, the part-time teachers, or the faculty in a particular program seemed no more or less typical of those individual subgroups than of alternative classification groups. This failure of persons to fall neatly into subgroups was often a source of frustration for me. But after I had completed the study I realized that the findings of individuality and yet similarity of personal style within and across subgroups were as informative as the alternative discovery of clearly defined subgroups.

I attempted judgmental stratified sampling. I made certain that I talked to administrators, faculty, faculty assistants, and a few support staff. I talked to instructors from every program and to four or five in each of the large programs. I talked to the tenured, the untenured, and the part-time; I spoke with those who had been in the college for a long time, those who had been there only a few years, and those who had been there only a few months. I talked to males and females, Sisters and laity. I sought senior and middle-level administrators, program directors, and persons whose sole responsibilities were teaching. But despite these attempts to select persons across strata, the sample turned out to be largely opportunistic because the "value" of different interviews varied so much. The value of particular interviews depended both on the insight of a particular informant and on the stage of the study; for example, two of my more insightful informants were an instructor

who had tenure and another who worked at the college only part-time. Furthermore, despite my efforts to identify prospective respondents through informal social situations, I often was surprised (sometimes pleasantly, sometimes not) in the actual interview situation.

My sampling of students, classes and meetings was entirely opportunistic. I soon realized that the interview-observation approach was a totally inappropriate means of surveying student opinion. I therefore turned to the student counselors (whose student sample was also biased) and to the results of questionnaire surveys. Armed with generalizations from these sources, I reviewed my student interviews and identified typical examples to use in the final report.

Apart from dropping in on informal classes and eavesdropping on formal ones, I depended on student and faculty comment for insight into classroom practices. There were a number of reasons for this. First, I didn't have the time to sit in on a large number of classes. Second, I had no expertise in the subjects being taught, so my judgments would have been limited necessarily to comments on classroom climate and teaching style. Third, after ten years of experience as a teacher in colleges and schools, I believed I could assess classroom climate adequately by eavesdropping on classes and observing the general climate in the college. I saw it as participatory, cooperative, and conscientious. Finally, I decided that assessment of teaching style was relatively unimportant, especially given the adult population and the work climate of MJC and my inability to appraise content. Faculty and students, on the other hand, were in a position to comment on content, its value to the students, and the clarity and structure of its presentation.

My greatest concern about my decision not to delve into classroom or curriculum evaluation was that teaching and curriculum, which are at the heart of the institution, would receive insufficient attention in the final report. The question had to be resolved in the light of what I could achieve in the time available and how I could best help the college in its review and planning activities.

I was able to attend only three faculty meetings. This was a disappointment to me, but I simply did not know when they were being held or even if they were being held.

In summary, I had interviews or conversations with over 45 faculty and staff members and about 20 students. About one-third of these were directly recorded. The time typically given to an interview with a faculty member was 45 minutes. Most recorded interviews were conducted in one-to-one settings in the respondents' offices. Student interviews usually occurred in groups of three or four and lasted 15 to 20 minutes; these were generally conducted in the student lounge or in classrooms.

I visited classrooms on nine occasions and observed many more from the corridors. On three occasions I toured all classrooms for the purpose of noting room usage, class sizes, use of facilities, class style, and classroom climate. I spent a total of approximately three hours observing students in the library and the audio-visual center; and on four or five occasions I reviewed audio-visual materials.

I attended one Administrative Group meeting (during which the evaluation proposal was outlined), one meeting of program directors, and one meeting of the faculty and clinical supervisors in Occupational Therapy. I sat in on one Faculty Development seminar. I attended two faculty/staff socials

(one at Thanksgiving and one at Christmas), and I had lunch and morning coffee in the faculty lounge almost every day I was at the college.

There were 15 days between November 13 and December 17 when I was actively observing and interviewing; I spend about half of that time recording. A number of other days at the college were devoted to reading documents and making notes.

Data Analysis and Report Writing

Sitting down to analyze and interpret the data as a prelude to writing the report was never a problem for me; I had done it already. Throughout the data collection period I had transcribed tapes, read and re-read transcripts, and searched for connections. I had planned interviews during my wakeful times at night. I had bored my wife and my children with my insights and evidence. With a couple of close friends I had discussed aspects that I was afraid were important to me only because I was not American. I knew my data, and by the end of the data collection period, I had others' interpretations of it on tape. For these reasons I was confident during the last interviews that further data collection was not necessary. In terms of my brief and the time available, I had the story, and somewhere along the way I had also begun to structure the report.

On the day after my last interview, I sat down and outlined the final report: chapter headings and subheadings and content outlines for each subsection. It took me only 1½ hours.

For sorting the data, my chapter subheadings became the categories and my content outlines became the criteria. I made three photocopies of some 220 pages of observation notes, leaving the original books intact.

Then for a day-and-a-half, I sat on the floor with a paper cutter, my three copies of the notebook, and 25 manila folders labeled with the chapter subheadings. Paragraph by paragraph I sorted the notes into one or another folder. In principle, the report was then written; I had only to synthesize the information in each folder.

I knew what I wanted in the final report. I wanted to show, not tell; to describe, not judge. I wanted a story that was alive with people and images. I wanted a presentation that was balanced from the beginning; one in which the introductory impressions were later clarified and detailed but never drastically shifted. I wanted a report that could be read at different levels; in other words, one that would be understood by mildly interested faculty members or outsiders, as well as by persons looking for insight into the college or for assistance with planning.

To know what I wanted was one thing; to make it happen was another. Many times I compared the task to writing a physics report. In the physics report persuasion is carried by logic rather than by imagery. As a result, the author's flair for writing is largely irrelevant; if the ideas and data are sound, good research will be recognized. Unfortunately, I feel the same is not true in the case study report. There the insights are carried by the imagery; communication has a greater chance of failing, and if it fails, the merit of the research goes unnoticed.

A second big difference between the two kinds of report is the way in which readers are manipulated. In the physics report, the "introduction" persuades readers that the research is important. The "procedure" section describes the thoroughness and elegance of the experiment's design. The "results and discussion" section convinces them that definitive answers are closer at hand. Throughout the report, readers are reminded that the

"truth" of the research is independent of the researcher; and to convey this impression, the author uses the impersonal past tense. By comparison, the naturalistic inquiry report is written in the first-person mode to remind readers of the researcher's personal involvement in the data. (Here objectivity means a different thing. It means that any other researcher could confirm the perceptions reported; it does not mean that those findings are inevitable or that they define a single or even the "one best" perspective.) The author manipulates readers more in the way that storyteller or playwright influences an audience: with a sense of plot and character development. I had no experience as a storyteller or playwright, but I did have some as an entertainer. I tried to reach into that experience for a sense of pace and timing and especially to avoid "overkill", that is unnecessarily, expounding on the meaning of an image as a comedian explaining a joke that is already understood.

A third difference between the two kinds of report is that the physics report is linear and thus proceeds logically from question to conclusion as does a mathematics proof. The case study report, on the other hand, has no "beginning" or "end". Along the way, interpretations are left mostly to the readers. (I struggled at many places throughout the report with the temptation to summarize.) The general style is divergent and often redundant. For example, in describing a group of students, the physics approach would be to take a general characteristic of individuals and cite evidence for it. If instead you start with a description of a particular individual, as befits the holistic approach of the case study report, then you suddenly move in a number of different directions and discuss a variety of characteristics. The balance to seek in a case study is a retained sense of unity; in other words, a story line without too many loose ends.

The structure of my report is presented in the table of contents below.

It's a Matter of Caring: Madonna Junior College

Contents

Dedication

Prologue: Six snapshots

Introduction

Chapter 1: Profiles

The setting: Buildings and facilities

The students

Faculty and staff

Teaching, learning, and caring

Chapter 2: A historical perspective

Chapter 3: Special issues

Coping with change: The case of nursing

The special case of general education

The impact of AIDP: Program management and evaluation

Epilogue: The family

The title and dedication set the stage. The prologue contains six short vignettes of college life. Through a collage of images, the reader's first impression of the institution is a global and lively one. I wanted that impression to be basically positive and warm but with some hints of doubts and weaknesses. The introduction has a number of purposes. One is to give a summarized view of the college: a view that provides a context for the story that follows and offers the reader something to hang onto. The second purpose is to briefly describe the nature of the study and the report. The third is to alert the readers to my personal biases and preconceptions, which

I suspect have colored the research. (In this I yielded to the advice of a number of sources on methodology, though I am not convinced that it is necessary or even helpful. First, it is not standard practice in other kinds of research, even though it can be just as important there. All research is subjective because it is creative and yet fits into a historical context. The traditional checks on subjective bias are the researcher's integrity and self-control, and such checks are just as available in naturalistic inquiry. In addition, I suspect that it is difficult to identify the most significant biases. For example, I distinguished my different cultural background; but perhaps one's personal interaction style and one's respect for and approach to other persons and their ideas are the factors that have the greatest bearing on the research results.)

Chapter 1 offers profiles of four aspects of the institution and attempts to fill out the initial impressions. Buildings and facilities are described first because they have the greatest bearing on the visitor's leading impressions of the college. The pace of the report quickens through the descriptions of the students, the faculty, personal interactions, teaching and learning at the college. I attempted to complete the global description by the end of Chapter 1; the rest of the report is more analytical and concerned with a search for meanings. Chapter 2 gives a historical perspective of the college's past and future. It is written mostly in a narrative style to provide some relief from the preponderance of imagery and quotes in the earlier and later sections. Together with the preceding sections, Chapter 2 paves the way for the discussion on special issues in Chapter 3. Each of the issues discussed has both curriculum and organizational aspects.

The report abruptly finishes with a short epilogue that presents the different views of the institution as a family. The metaphors are powerful but ambiguous and are presented without comment. I wanted to encourage the reader to reflect on the data and the story and to search again for meanings. Show, don't tell; describe, don't judge.

Final Editing and Validation

Two groups were consulted in the editing and validation of the report: one comprising two experts from the University of Minnesota faculty and the other consisting of persons within Madonna Junior College. Not surprisingly, the two groups assessed the report using quite different criteria. The reactions of the individuals within MJC were especially interesting. For example, there are places in the report where I quoted persons from memory, other places where I paraphrased, and some places where I edited taped interviews to produce more succinct comments. I took those bits and pieces to the individuals who had provided them and asked them to judge the accuracy of the information. There were a couple of occasions where I had simply misunderstood. Almost invariably, however, persons wished to take back or at least adjust their comments as I had reported them; for example, to change a word for a synonym or to insert a qualification. I was subsequently grateful that most of my quotes had been directly recorded. But in a sense their reactions were fair; comments made during informal conversations often do not reach the degree of accuracy necessary for written documents. Individuals were also concerned that they might be identified as sources of particular comments, and this further encouraged them to be careful with shades of meaning. The question of ethics is a bothersome and continuing one (Hamilton, 1977).

The validation exercise was a revelation to me. I suddenly realized that even though I had aimed to produce a global description of the college, many persons there were going to read the report inch-by-inch. In addition, there would be sections or even single sentences lifted out of context and used for a variety of purposes. The report is a political document and has ramifications for the individuals who provided the data base.

I then gave the entire report to the director of the Evaluation Office at the college; I sought his perceptions of the validity of the global impressions and details in the report. This was the first overall test of accuracy for the research and the report. I was surprised that the director saw so much more comment in the document than I had conciously included. Indeed, in a "show, don't tell; describe, don't judge" format, there is room for a variety of interpretations.

The final judgment of the research, however, cannot be made now or even in three months. According to its evaluation function, it must provide useful information to persons who are making decisions; it must also be powerful enough to persuade them to act.

Meanwhile, I go back to my job in Australia, but not as the same person I was when I started the project. The naturalistic inquiry process inevitably has a profound personal impact on the researcher. I tried to convey that in the dedication I used in the final report.

> I stood here for a while to see all there was to see. It is time to go now. I have learned to look, to see in many different ways. My vision has evolved, expanded...
>
> (Peg Randall
> MJC Graduate, Summer 1979)

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